

**LIGHT**  
**IN THE HOME**





~~Miss S. B. Whitehead~~  
Mrs J. S. Whitehead  
From Granny Holliday  
London  
England.

Received on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1928.

To dear Ann  
with love  
from

Auntie Beih March 7<sup>th</sup> 1962















# LIGHT IN THE HOME

An Illustrated Magazine for Family Reading

NEW SERIES. VOLUME VI.



The Religious Tract Society

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## Light in the Home

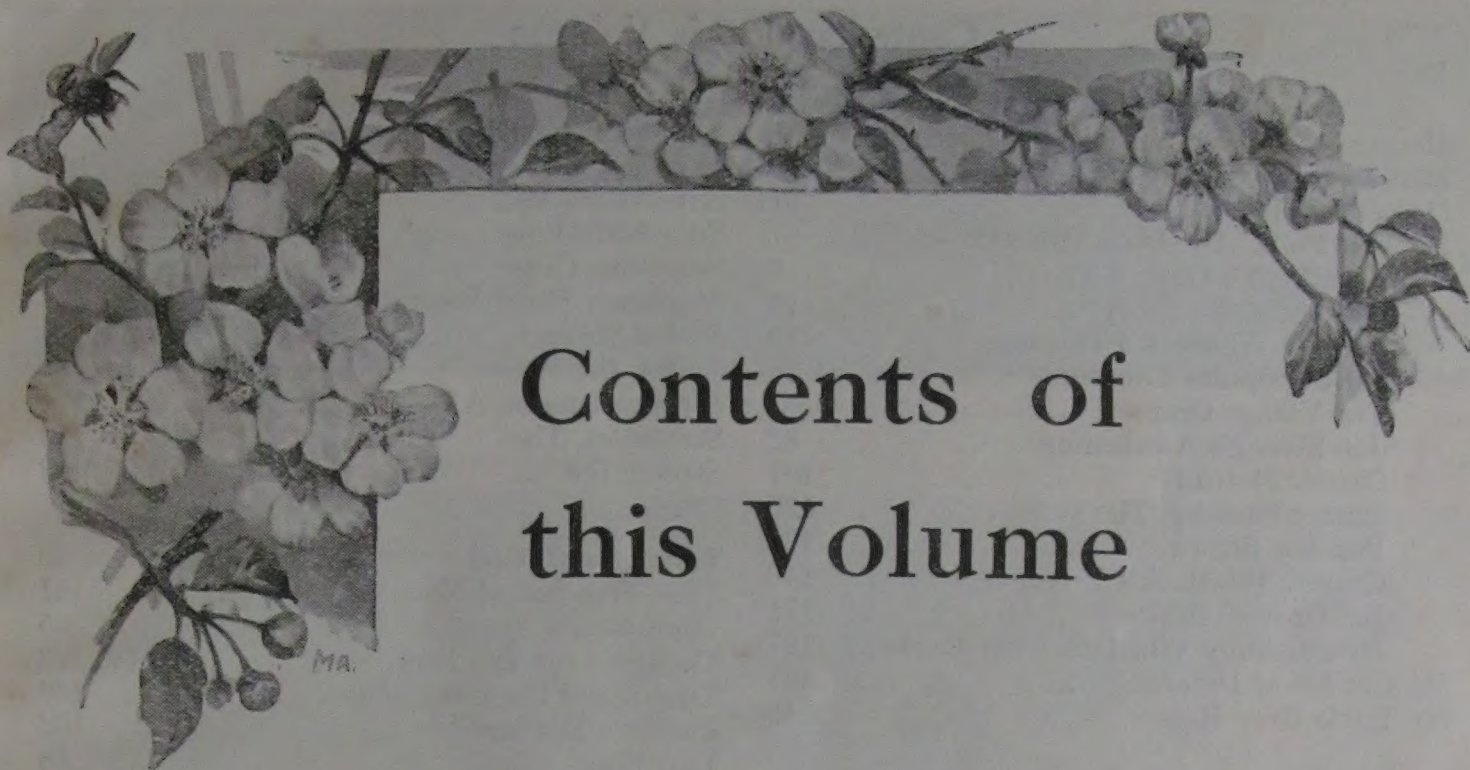
MANY an hour in the years that have flown  
Sorrow and sadness have claimed for their own,  
Yet there's a moment that always has come,  
When we've remembered the dear light of  
Home.

Rough is Life's pathway and dreary the day,  
Footsore and weary we plod on our way,  
But in the evening, though far we may roam,  
Turn we once more to the light in the Home.

So, on Life's ocean, when storm-clouds distress,  
On to our haven we steadily press;  
Over the breakers, the rocks and the foam,  
Thanks be to God, shines the Light of *His*  
*Home.*

NORA C. USHER





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"It's New Year's Day—Make a new beginning!"

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# Beginning Again

By AMOS E. DENNER

IT was New Year's Day, and after the snow had ceased a bitter frost retained its grip upon the white countryside round about Tosclare in a manner that suggested winter for ever.

Usually that part of the country was noted for its dry, bracing air, and because of this the place had become the resort of folk seeking physical benefit. And amongst these semi-invalids Herbert Grayford was to be numbered. He was a man who had foolishly tried to burn the business candle at both ends, and was now paying the price in the form of a bad nervous breakdown.

Herbert Grayford had been reared in a home where the Word of God had been its true light, but, alas, like so many others, he had gradually allowed the stress of business life to engulf nearly everything pertaining to that other life of his immortal soul, and which must exist long after the world's commerce has ceased to be.

Acting on the principle that men got paid dividends according to the amount of energy they put into their calling, he had invested every ounce of himself. This, of course, was quite proper—if only he had not left God out.

Now, on this New Year's morning, he had set out for a walk over the Tosclare hills, and as he wandered aimlessly along even the very hang of the cloak which he wore seemed to suggest despondency and gloom. If ever a man's appearance indicated "beaten in the fight," Herbert Grayford's did that day.

Then it was, that after walking for about two hours over a part of the hill country that he was unfamiliar with, the man suddenly awoke to the startling fact that he had lost his way. Perhaps in the ordinary way this would scarcely have troubled Herbert Grayford at all, but, now, in his present nervous state, it was different. He began to shake violently, and, in spite of the cold, he perspired with sheer fright.

"This has completely settled me," he exclaimed in a tone of agitation. "I'm a lost man, with a lost soul. . . . Not that it matters much. . . . If only I weren't so afraid. . . . Who is that man hurrying after me? He seems to have a gun in his hand. I'll run for it."

And, suiting the action to his words, Herbert Grayford, who had in his time controlled scores of others in the world of commerce, began to

flee from some one whom he had never before seen in his life. He ran as though seeking to escape his greatest enemy, when, all the time, did he but know it, he was fleeing from one destined to prove his greatest friend. Such is part of the payment demanded from many who seek to gain the present at the cost of the future. And, often, such cases as Herbert Grayford have proved the despair of the cleverest doctor.

\* \* \* \*

One of the busiest Christmas seasons at Shepherd's Mission had just ended. It had been a delightful experience for Gilbert Wiseman, the genial superintendent, and his loyal staff of workers. Early and late they had laboured at their gracious task of making clear the practical meaning of "peace and goodwill" to the many adherents of the place.

Were this the proper place to speak of it many are the stories of redeeming grace that could be told in connection with the work at the Mission. The main theme there proclaimed was "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," and because the Gospel was faithfully preached the Lord honoured His word, and signs followed—signs that made even the angels sing for joy. Drunkards were reclaimed; bits of life's broken earthenware were mended; songs of sins forgiven continually ascended to heaven; and to many who attended the Hall the love of God as manifested in Jesus Christ became the sweetest reality of their once sin-scarred lives.

And, because the human heart is capable of gratitude, it has to be recorded that the workers and members of "Shepherd's" did a gracious thing when they quietly collected enough money between themselves to send their beloved leader away for a few days' change of scene before he faced up to the strenuous task of carrying on the work of the Mission for the remainder of the winter.

Thus it was that Gilbert Wiseman found himself on the lovely Tosclare hills at the very time that Herbert Grayford, weary and unstrung, was wandering about the place haunted by many fears, and the pathetic victim of overwork.

When Gilbert Wiseman had set out from the boarding-house for a brisk walk over the beautiful heights, he had not forgotten that it was New Year's morning, and, though not in the least knowing how his prayer was to be



## Beginning Again

answered, he had asked God to help him to win some one for Jesus Christ on this, the first day of another year. He believed in good beginnings, and could conceive of no better way of commencing the New Year than by being used to lead a soul into the light of salvation.

As he swung briskly over the hard snow-covered ground, his skates dangling from his wrist, he looked the very picture of pure happiness and consecrated energy.

Coming suddenly over the brow of a hillock, he felt a thrill of pleasure upon catching sight of some one, apparently a fellow-traveller, but that thrill was quickly changed to a feeling of surprise at the strange way that the man seemed to be regarding him. But when, a moment later, the man began to run like a rabbit from its pursuer, without more ado he sprinted after him, and speedily overtook the retreating figure.

"Excuse me, old fellow, but what's the game?" he inquired good-humouredly, when the man stopped and cowered in a manner that suggested all sorts of strange things to Gilbert Wiseman's mind. "Do you think I'm a detective, or a highwayman, or what?" Then, noticing the blanched face and startled eyes of Herbert Grayford, he said soothingly: "You seem to be very ill; let me help you if I can."

But all the answer that Gilbert Wiseman got was: "I'm afraid, and done for. . . . It wouldn't be so bad, only I'm afraid." Then, after a moment's silence, the man added: "And if you were like me you would be afraid too."

Gilbert Wiseman quickly "sensed" the position of things, and in a short time had so far won the confidence of his fellow-traveller as to persuade him to take his arm, and accompany him back to Tosclare village.

Brotherly kindness, and Christly sympathy, are still the keys that unlock the way to human hearts. This being so, Herbert Grayford had soon revealed enough of his history to enable Gilbert Wiseman to act as becometh a wise winner of souls. And, because of this, there arose in the heart of Herbert Grayford the desire to begin a new life supported by the Strong Son of God.

"You have heard much about what I've been speaking of long before this," said Herbert Wiseman as, earnestly and tenderly, he sought to help the distressed man by his side. "That Christian home of your boyhood which you have told me of was bound to have left some impression for good. . . . It's New Year's

Day. . . . Make a new beginning. . . . Try to realise, dear friend, that God has just sent both of us to Tosclare so that the prayers of your worthy parents should be answered. . . . Jesus Christ has said, 'Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.' . . . Won't you trust Him to save you? It's just a matter of taking His strong arm as confidently as you have taken mine."

For a while Herbert Grayford made no response. He seemed so full of his own thoughts, but, nevertheless, the Holy Spirit was at work as the two men tramped over the hard snow that day.

Suddenly he broke his silence.

"I would like to do it," he said quietly. "This new beginning ought to be made . . . only I—I seem so much afraid that——"

"Then let me give you God's five remedies against fear," interjected Gilbert Wiseman eagerly. "I read them in my Bible this morning. . . . They will surely be something for you to start the New Year with. Listen. Here they are:

"'Fear thou not, for I am with thee.'

'Be not dismayed, for I am thy God.'

'I will strengthen thee.'

'I will help thee.'

'I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.'"

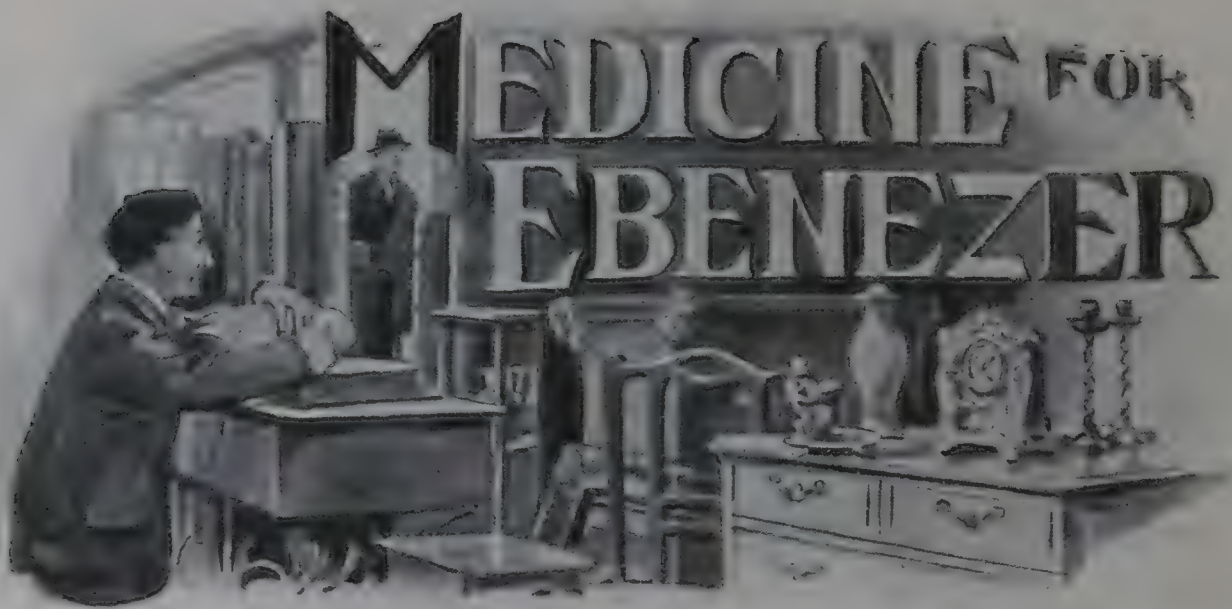
And, because the entrance of God's word giveth light, the darkness, and gloom, and fear departed like a flash from Herbert Grayford's mind as he received the message of Divine encouragement that day.

\* \* \* \*

When Gilbert Wiseman returned to Shepherd's Mission he greatly cheered the hearts of his loyal helpers by introducing a new voluntary worker into their happy midst.

Of course, he did not mention the circumstances in which he had met his new friend, for there are some experiences too sacred for public ears. He did, however, inform them that the coming of their valuable helper to the Mission was the direct result of their kindness in sending him off to the lovely Tosclare hills for a brief change.

And there was much thankfulness to God when Herbert Grayford, in his first timid speech, in response to the warm welcome given him, declared his intention not only of supporting the Mission financially, but of telling all and sundry that the only hope for souls gone astray was to begin again with Jesus Christ.



By ELEANOR CLARE

THE owner of the second-hand furniture shop at the corner of King Street was of such small stature that his shoulders just appeared above the top of a sewing machine. He used it as a table for his account book. It was at the back of the shop. Here, he was within easy call of his invalid wife; and here his small, greenish-grey eyes could catch sight of a possible customer.

A shock of black hair, a pallid complexion and lines deep-drawn from his nostrils to the corners of his mouth completed the picture of Ebenezer Wilks. To-day, the lines were unusually deep. He was worried. And he was scribbling down the names of customers who were behind with their payments when he saw a man in a grey suit cross the road.

"Ebenezer!" called a voice from the kitchen. "It's time for my medicine, an' you've put it where I can't get at it!"

He stepped immediately to the kitchen door and gazed tenderly at the dark, bobbed head and laughing eyes of the little figure he had propped in a big chair by the fire.

"That clock's ten minutes fast!" he said gently. "You're looking champion! The landlord'll be here in a minute."

"Do we owe him much, Ebb?" she asked, looking scared.

"Only twenty pounds! What's twenty pounds or twenty shillings? It's all the same to us," he replied off-hand.

He jingled his keys in his pocket as if to assure her what a lot of money he had. But he was careful to close the door behind him, and it was with troubled eyes that he watched the

landlord wedge his way between the rolls of linoleum at the door.

"I'm sorry, sir," he began, "to ask for extension of time; my wife's just recovering from an illness. It's put me to a deal of expense. She's getting on champion now, so I'll soon be able to pay all I owe. One needs a lot of ready cash even for a business like this." He waved his hand around the shop. "We haven't been married very long, and her illness has been a sad handicap."

"You've been here about eighteen months, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir, an' never been back in my rent before."

Mr. Eccles nodded.

"Didn't you marry Elsie Pearce? The best maid we've ever had, so my sister says."

"We're very happy, sir!" smiled Wilks. "This is the only trouble we—I have; for I've been able to keep it from her so far. But she'll have to know soon—as soon as she's a bit stronger. I'll sell part of the stock then, and pay the four months' rent in a lump sum. After that I'd like to pay weekly if it's all the same to you, sir? It'll be easier."

The flash of nobility in the face raised to his was not lost on Mr. Eccles. The need for money had given Wilks something that money couldn't buy—something greater.

There was a mingling of compassion and respect in Mr. Eccles' voice as he said:

"Suppose we wipe this debt clean off the slate and start afresh. Then you can pay me weekly from to-day as you suggest?"

"The whole twenty pounds, sir?" gasped



## Medicine for Ebenezer

Wilks. "Oh! I—I can't thank you. It'll put new life into me."

"That's all right! Say nothing about it, or people'll think I'm mad," he laughed. "Where's the rent book?"

Wilks took it from a drawer at the back of the till, scarcely realising his good fortune, and when he tried again to thank his benefactor, Mr. Eccles just smiled and left the other staring at the signature under the word "paid."

It was still a minute off two o'clock when he opened the kitchen door. His hand shook as he poured out the medicine, and the tinkling of the spoon against the glass roused his wife from a light slumber. He raised her gently, putting his hand under the pillow to support her; and when she lay back again with closed eyes, he kissed her tenderly on the forehead.

The sound of an approaching footstep in the shop made him tiptoe from the room and close the door gently behind him. There stood a young woman with strands of fair hair hanging mournfully beneath her wide-brimmed black hat. Falteringly she stated that it was impossible to pay yet the last two instalments for her sewing machine; and as Ebenezer Wilks listened, the thick lines deepened again from nostril to mouth. He referred to his notebook.

"It's twenty shillings you owe!" he grumbled.

"I'll have it next week," Miss Dyson exclaimed emphatically. "When I've finished the dress the lady'll pay me immediately!"

"Ask her for the money now!" he suggested.

"Oh, I can't do that! I might lose her custom."

"Then I must take away the machine."

"But I can't get the dress done at all if you take it away!"

"Business is business!" he muttered, turning his head away from the eyes now full of tears.

"You see," he went on, "some one came in only yesterday and wanted a machine just like that! I could have sold it, an' I said I'd get one like it. She'll come in again to-day, or I might have given you another chance. I'm coming round for that machine at eight o'clock, when I've shut up shop; remember? Business is business!" he muttered, not daring to meet her eyes. "I've got to live too, you know; an' my wife's ill."

"I'm sorry," she replied, turning away.

He knew she was crying as she passed the window, though he did not look at her; and he did his best not to think of her. But his

remark: "Twenty pounds or twenty shillings! it's all the same to me!" had an unpleasant trick of recurring to his mind while he ticketed a small table and a chest of drawers in the window.

He tried to trick his conscience that twenty pounds or twenty shillings was all the same to him when he had nothing; and that twenty pounds or twenty shillings was all the same to Mr. Eccles who had plenty; but that twenty pounds or twenty shillings was quite a different thing when it was a question of business. Then the vision of a girl weeping flashed across his mind; and so his conscience accused him and then excused him all the while and made him feel very uncomfortable.

Meanwhile, Miss Dyer hurried along a neighbourhood where the streets were wider and the houses larger, with beautiful gardens in front. At last she came to a house where the high wall of the garden was topped with broken glass.

She entered the large gate and ran along the drive. But when she was informed, in answer to her knock, that the lady would not be at home until late, she sat on an oak seat in the porch and sobbed bitterly, the moment the heavy hall door was shut.

Mr. Eccles had been busy in the conservatory when the sound of weeping drew him to the door, and presently he was looking down on a big black hat and the white nape of a girl's neck.

"Well! well! well! What's the matter?" he asked compassionately, patting her gently on the shoulder.

She looked up, and her sensitive lip quivered as she stammered out her trouble.

"It won't be my machine at all if I can't get twenty shillings; an' I'll lose all I've paid in!" she sobbed. "I came to see if Miss Eccles would let me have twenty shillings in advance, and, and—she's not in."

"But no one can take away your machine if dressmaking is your living?"

"You see, it isn't my own until twenty shillings is paid. Mr. Wilks says he has a customer for it who'll buy it straight out."

She clasped and unclasped her hands in her agitation, and she did not notice the flush of anger that crossed Mr. Eccles' face.

"Do you mean Mr. Wilks in King Street?" he asked, taking the vacant seat by her side.

She nodded assent.

"You'll have your machine," he exclaimed, with a sudden deepening of the voice. "I'll



## Medicine for Ebenezer

see Mr. Wilks myself. I know him. But do take this!" handing her a pound note.

"And you'll explain to Miss Eccles and I'll give it to Mr. Wilks."

"You'll have your machine without money when Mr. Wilks sees me," he replied emphatically. "Won't you take this money?"

"But if I have my machine I can wait until I've earned it, thank you."

"I'd like to help you."

But she shook her head with gentle dignity and gazed at him with clear childlike eyes. And for the second time that day, Mr. Eccles, who had spent the greater part of his life in accumulating wealth, was struck by the knowledge that money was not the greatest thing in the world. In the silvery dusk, something of the same nobility crossed her face as he had seen on the face of Ebenezer Wilks; though, true! the moment the trouble was removed, and temptation assailed him, the light of God had disappeared from his eyes.

"Let's go and see Mr. Wilks," said Mr. Eccles. So together they walked down the garden path.

The shop was in semi-darkness; and loud talking in the kitchen smothered the sound of the tinkling bell. There was a streak of light

under the kitchen door that was a little ajar. Mr. Eccles heard his own name.

"The only way we can thank Mr. Eccles, Ebb, is to do the same thing to somebody else."

"What? Give somebody else twenty pounds?"

"No! 'Twenty shillings or twenty pence! Just what they need and what we can afford. It's the parable of——"

But she came to a sudden stop. Mr. Eccles, having knocked in vain, had pushed the door open a little. The moment Wilks caught sight of his visitors together, he cast an appealing glance at the landlord; and for the sake of the happy, flushed face of the invalid, Mr. Eccles contented himself by saying:

"Miss Dyer is making a dress for my sister, so she wants to be reassured in regard to the machine."

Immediately Wilks went into the shop, and returned a moment later with a receipt for the dressmaker. She was wondering which of them she should thank, when Mrs. Wilks began:

"Ebenezer has told me what you've done, sir. He says he don't know how to thank you, but I tell him he can only thank you by doin' the same to somebody else worse off'n ourselves.



"Miss Dyer is making a dress for my sister, so she wants to be reassured in regard to the machine"



## Medicine for Ebenezer

It's the parable of our blessed Lord, isn't it? That story of a king whose servant owed him a big sum of money and he forgave him the debt; then somebody owed that servant a small sum of money but the servant wouldn't let 'im off, and he was tortured and put into prison. But Ebbie's different. He wouldn't hurt a fly."

Wilks, stung by his wife's words, bowed his head. He now knew what it meant to be tortured and cast into prison. He knew the prison was his conscience which had tormented him since two o'clock. He walked with them to the shop door, and said earnestly:

"I want to be like—like—" pointing towards the kitchen—"she thinks me."

They smiled understandingly, and a moment later Miss Dyer hurried away to her home. Mr. Eccles walked on, dwelling on the practical truth of the Kingdom, when he had a further

proof. Miss Dyer stopped about ten yards from him and dropped a coin into the cap of a beggar. Then she turned, smiled at Mr. Eccles, and disappeared round the corner.

Wilks had watched the scene from his doorway, and was also meditating on it when:

"Ebenezer," called his wife, "it's time for my medicine again! It's ten past six by this clock!"

Only four hours ago! And he had gone through more in those four hours than in all the years of his life!

"I've had *my* medicine," he said gravely, taking the bottle off the mantelpiece.

"Who gave it you?" she inquired, with a mischievous glance.

"You! It was bitter!"

And his little wife's laugh rang out in appreciation of the joke that her Ebenezer should require medicine.

## Odds and Ends

### No Such Thing as Chance

The first thing that men learned as soon as they began to study Nature carefully, was that some events take place in regular order, and that some causes always give rise to the same effects. The sun always rises on one side of the sky and sets on the other side. The changes of the moon follow one another in the same order, and with similar intervals; water always flows downhill; fire always burns; animals are born, grow, reach maturity, and die ago after age in the same way.

Thus the notion of an order of Nature and of a fixity in the relation of cause and effect between things gradually entered the minds of men. So far as such order prevailed, it was felt that things were explained; while things that could not be explained were said to have come by chance or accident.

But the more carefully Nature has been studied the more widely has order been found to prevail, while what seemed disorder has proved to be nothing but complexity; until at present no one is so foolish as to believe that anything happens by chance, or that there are any real accidents in the sense of events which have no cause. And if we say a thing happens by chance, everybody admits that all we really mean is that we do not know its cause or the reason why that particular thing happens. Chance and accident are only other names for ignorance.

HUNLEY

### Maxims

Acquire honesty; seek humility; practise economy; love fidelity.

A wounded reputation is seldom cured.

A man had better be poisoned in his blood than in his principle.

A good cause makes a stout heart and a strong arm.

Anger and haste hinder good counsel.

Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue.

A faithful friend is a strong defence.

A man who breaks his word bids others be false to him.

### Don'ts for Church-goers

Don't visit. Worship.

Don't stop in the end of the pew. Move along.

Don't choose the back seat. Leave it for the late comers.

Don't sit with your hand to your head, as if worshipping hurt you.

Don't criticise your preacher. Remember your own shortcomings.

Don't lounge or loll. Show reverence by the way you sit and stand and kneel.

Don't keep your hymn-book to yourself. Share it with your neighbour if he has not one.





# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village

by Amos E. Denner

## New Year's Day

TO speak of Moortor village in the summer-time is to tell of a delightfully quaint old-world collection of thatched cottages standing in spacious old-fashioned gardens glowing with flowers of charming colour and sweetness.

Then when the pure fresh sunshine kissed the broad expanse of moorland which fringed the village, something of the purple violet on the face of this great tract of nature's wild country seemed reflected in the very being of the little place, and gave it a charm all its own.

But to-day was another story. It was New Year's Eve; the hands of the curious old chiming clock in Moortor belfry pointed to the hour of four, and the time of singing of birds seemed all too distant, as the stinging north-east wind scurried across the boulder-strewn waste of the rugged landscape.

Snow was in the air, and some sturdy little moor ponies neighed apprehensively at the heavy clouds gathering thick about them.

Instinct had driven them nearer than usual to Moortor village; it would have been comparatively easy to "pound" the frisky little creatures that afternoon.

Just as four o'clock struck, great white flakes began to fall. The wind twisted and twirled them at will, as if reluctant to allow the silent feathery visitors to come to rest on the ground.

Soon the sky was thick with millions of dancing persistent flakes. Then, with the coming of the snow, the wind increased in fury, and the great Moortor blizzard had begun.

One of the houses in Moortor had "Sunny View" painted on its little wooden garden gate, but just now the snow seemed intent upon blotting out that unseasonable name.

A glance inside the house, however, would have quickly revealed the fact that, whatever the conditions of the outer world, all was cheerful warmth and brightness in the cosy shelter of this little home.

The tenant of "Sunny View" was a dear old lady, Granny Whitlock by name, and somehow it had become difficult to think of Moortor apart from this old soul. In a beautiful way she seemed to have become part of the very life of the place. The secret was not far to seek; God has His witnesses in the quiet byways as well as in the world's busy marts, and dear old Granny Whitlock was surely to be reckoned among those whom the Saviour referred to as "the salt of the earth."

In the long-ago days she had been a happy blushing bride. On a glorious Michaelmas morning, Matthew Whitlock had brought her across the heather-covered moor and installed her as mistress of "Sunny View." Life seemed very sweet for the young couple then, and, in the eyes of the handsome young husband, Mary Whitlock was the best little woman in the world.

Alas that joy is so swift of foot! Mary Whitlock was a widow within a few brief months! They brought home the dead body of her husband on the following New Year's Day!



## Moortor Folk

How the fatal accident happened nobody seemed to know. There had been a "drive" for the purpose of catching and selecting the fittest of the moor ponies. Matthew Whitlock was one of the mounted men, and when, at the final "pounding" of the ponies, his horse arrived riderless, it was obvious that something unusual had befallen him. An hour later they found the young husband curled against a great boulder away out on the moor, and at the inquest it was presumed that his death was occasioned through being thrown from his horse.

The hearts of the villagers went out in sympathy to the poor little widow, and when, later, a tiny baby boy arrived at "Sunny View," something happened that caused quite a flutter of pleasurable excitement throughout the neighbourhood.

Maybe, in a larger and more important place than Moortor, the event about to be recorded would have passed unnoticed by busy folk, but as this story is a simple chronicle of some happenings in a quiet village, to overlook it would be a pity.

The above-mentioned flutter began, first of all, with young James Grice, the village postman, for he was amazed with the size of his delivery round one morning.

"Over fifty extra letters to-day!" he gasped. "Goodness me! whatever is Moortor coming to? Things must be getting more like London every day."

Just then he discovered that one of the extra missives was addressed to himself, and a broad grin spread over his face.



The tall elderly man standing before her was none other than Joseph Snell!



## Moortor Folk

"'Tisn't often I get called 'James Grice, Esquire,'" he exclaimed, as, with obvious pleasure, he slit the envelope. "'Tis generally plain 'Jimmy' with most folk about here, except at election times, then some people's manners are most amazin'. Hullo! What's this?" And half-aloud the man of letters read:

"A meeting of parishioners is called at the Village Hall on Tuesday next, for the purpose of presenting our respected neighbour in adversity—Mrs. Mary Whitlock—with a little token of regard and sympathy. As the fund subscribed is a public one, it is hoped that a full attendance——"

"Now, that's what I call a bit of real Christianity," exclaimed the postman, interrupting his reading, and examining his letter more closely. "Signed by the Vicar and the Chapel parson too. I suppose there's more truth than most folk think in Church or Chapel ways of worship. The real trouble is with the people who neglect both."

What happened on the night of the ceremony will best be understood by quoting the following extract from the *Westland Weekly Observer*:

"After Mrs. Whitlock had received the generous purse of money, Mr. Joseph Snell ascended the platform and sprung a happy surprise upon the widow by asking her acceptance of the deeds of 'Sunny View.' Needless to state, this generous gift was loudly applauded by all present. It is understood that Mr. Joseph Snell is leaving Moortor for Canada almost immediately. Such men of public spirit can ill be spared, and we are confident that the best wishes of the whole parish will follow Mr. Snell in his new home across the seas."

But the news just set out is many years old, and Mary Whitlock's hair had silvered since then.

Now the anniversary of her saddest New Year's Day had come again, and, with it, the great Moortor blizzard.

Granny Whitlock placed a fresh log in the

old-fashioned fireplace, and soon the yellow flames danced merrily around it, giving an amber glow to the whole room, delightfully warm and enticing. Then, lighting the lamp, she drew a small table to the thick home-made hearth-rug, and covering the table with a snowy cloth, she quietly prepared her tea.

All was ready, and the old soul was just about to close up the inside window shutters, when, suddenly, she was startled by a knock on the door.

"Mercy me!" she exclaimed, somewhat nervously. "Whoever would think of being out on a night like this . . . ? Perhaps my ears deceived me, though. . . . It may have been the noise of the wind."

But when the knock was rather urgently repeated, and she unfastened the door, it was to behold a veritable snow man standing on the step.

The wind blew gustily into the room, causing the lamp to splutter alarmingly. Instantly the old lady's sympathy

went out to the visitor. Whoever he might be, or whatever his business, the outside world was a cruel place for any mortal just now, so without more ado, Granny Whitlock exclaimed:

"You'd best be shaking off as much snow as you can, and step right inside. 'Tis a queer night for doorstep callers."

And if Granny Whitlock had already been startled by that first knock at her door, the surprise was as nothing compared to that which she experienced when she discovered that the tall, elderly man standing before her was none other than Joseph Snell!

The man had come back over the years—had been driven back would be the correct designation. He had a story to tell; some truth to reveal; some burden to get off his conscience.

"This is New Year's Day, Mary," he said, after being persuaded to remove his overcoat and muffler, and to partake of some refreshing, warming tea. . . . "You know what happened to Matthew long years ago. . . . At least, you think you know. . . . But I've come home to tell you the truth. . . . May God forgive me."

And the force of the blizzard threatened to shake "Sunny View" to its very foundations as Joseph Snell began his tragic story of the blackest long-ago New Year's Day in Granny Whitlock's life.

(To be continued.)

Untrod the path that lies before thy feet,  
Unknown the end to which its windings lead,  
Yet firmly step, for He will be thy Guide  
Who promised to supply thy every need.

Sealed are the hours of the coming year  
But one by one their meaning shall appear,  
And every one disclose a Father's will  
To bless His child with gladness or with ill.



# PICTURES FROM AFAR

By L. B. Paull



## I

HAVING had a daughter working in the great land of China since 1911, it has come to my mind that perhaps some of the readers of *Light in the Home* would be interested in what occurs out there. And I propose this with the greater confidence because I feel that the weekly account that comes to us, fresh from a missionary's pen, is more likely to give a correct rendering of events than the somewhat unreliable news that one gets from the daily Press. These letters are written off at great speed, indeed difficult to read because of their hurry, and yet they convey the true atmosphere of earnest work among a people who are indeed to be pitied, for, through their dark beliefs, they are "all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Why not convert the heathen at home? is a phrase one often hears; it comes chiefly from those who grudge the money that is spent on missionary work. But the answer to that surely is this: Our people are born under English skies where the knowledge of the true God is taught, and if they *care* enough they can learn of Him. But no thought of a God of Love ever comes to the heathen mind except when taught by those who go from Christian countries. It is the god who strikes, and who must always be kept in a good temper whatever it may cost, that holds sway, and foreigners are often surprised to see bits of coloured paper, ribbons and trinkets hung on trees, hedges and around wells to propitiate these gods.

A few days ago we heard of a cook who was called home from the people whom he served because his family were in trouble. Several of the members had died off suddenly, so they called in a soothsayer, who told them that the devils were being blown in from a threshing-floor next door. The cook and his clan destroyed the threshing-floor! In another letter is the following extract:—

"We have just celebrated the Chinese New Year, and the next excitement is the Feast of Lanterns, which comes off next week. Each little village has a huge paper dragon made on a bamboo frame, and each night for a week the whole village turns out after dark in a procession headed by some one carrying the huge dragon and followed by others, with small lanterns, which make the body. Seen from a distance it looks wonderfully real. They

go round the fields and the dragon is supposed to swallow up all evil influences that might do harm to their crops so that they can start the new year in good heart. All the little children enjoy it immensely, but, of course, it

has its sad side. On the Festival next week, all these dragons will be burnt, but the children will still go on remembering the evil spirits that may have been in hiding and that did not get swallowed up by the old dragon. We want them to know that God is a Father who not only created the earth and the sky and the seeds, but who has this wonderful world in His keeping, letting the rain that helps the crops fall on the fields of the "just," and even on the fields of the "unjust."

To scatter these dark superstitions is the aim of the missionary, but what most people fail to remember is that it takes time to change the customs of centuries, and that sympathy and prayer from those who still remain in England are needed.





## For Another's Sake

IT was an eager but very wistful little face that gazed out of the carriage window, as the train sped on its way to distant Wales. Eager—because Fred Wilson had never taken such a long journey before; wistful—because with every revolution of the wheels, he was being carried further and further away from his home, to live among strangers!

To understand the reason of Fred's journey we must go back six years.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson worked hard to support their twin boys Fred and Bill, who were (as their mother often proudly said) "as like as two peas in a pod." The twins, in their turn, were devoted to each other. As babies they had cried together, played together, and now at the age of nine they were together sharing their experiences of school life.

One morning, during the holiday time, Mrs. Wilson sent the lads off, each with a small basket of washing. They started together, for as far as the town their way lay in a similar direction. Parting there, each went on his errand, and though not meeting again, both boys amused themselves by looking in the shops on their return journey.

Bill did so with special interest, for snugly hidden away in the depths of his trouser pocket were two pence, earned by himself the day before! Two whole pennies to be spent on sweets, to be later shared with Fred!

After carefully making his choice, with an empty pocket but a light heart, the boy sauntered on, till he came to a standstill before a large corner shop. It was a grocer's, and at the entrance, on a slab, was arranged a most tempting display of bacon and cheese. How jolly, thought Bill, if he could afford to buy some *cheese*, and his gaze fell longingly on one particular piece. Why! if that were his, with some bread saved from supper, he and Fred could have a midnight feast!

Then came the thought, "No one is looking; if you slipped it into the basket, no one would see."

Bill thrust the temptation from him, but it returned and he drew a little nearer to the slab. He looked round. Yes, even the policeman on point duty in the road was turning the other way. And then, almost before he realised it, Bill had snatched his prize, popped it into

the basket, covered it with the laundry cloth, and was hastily making his way up the street!

But he was not happy. Conscience was beginning to work. It told him that there was One Who *had* seen, and he began to wonder also what Fred would think. However, it was too late to turn back now!

When close to his home, Bill caught sight of his brother, and in a few hurried words confided his secret before going in. But there seemed no fun in it now, and Fred looked very serious.

That was an anxious afternoon for the two brothers. Sitting alone in the kitchen they spoke in whispers. But as time passed, Bill's fear began to abate; until suddenly glancing out of the window, he sprang up with a cry of terror, and with one agonised look at his brother, darted upstairs!

Fred, following that glance, saw to his dismay, that a policeman was coming up the garden path!

The boy stood his ground, but as a loud knock sounded at the door, he waited with fast beating heart, while his mother came from the back of the house to answer it.

The policeman stated his errand. The theft had been discovered and traced to one of her youngsters, he said; adding as he entered the kitchen, "That's the young rascal, that's him! I seen him hanging around Simm's door this morning right enough!"

Fred opened his mouth to deny the charge, then firmly closed it again, while his mother burst into tears.

"Come on, show us where the cheese is," said the man in blue; and Fred with trembling hand, but head held erect, went to his school sachel that hung on a nail under his coat, and produced the stolen property!

How it hurt that his mother should think him a *thief*! But it was the only way to save Bill. No one should ever know. He would bear the punishment for him!

So it was Fred who was brought before the magistrates—Fred who was sentenced to spend six years at a reformatory school—Fred, who took Bill's place!

Fred spent six long years at a reformatory school. He was not always happy, but he soon made friends with the other boys, and was taught to mend shoes among other useful things.



## For Another's Sake

Then, when the six years were over, Fred heard with mingled feelings, that he was to be sent to work on a farm right away in North Wales! No wonder that as the train sped on its way, our first glimpse of him showed us a very wistful face! And when Fred reached his journey's end, he found that no one on that farm could speak a word of English! It was a lonely life indeed!

But years pass, and Fred and Bill once more united are now full-grown men, still "as alike as two peas," and still devoted to each other. Together they have shared hardship and danger, for together they served in the Great War,

where Bill "made good," and showed that he was a coward no longer.

But Bill can never forget the past, and now, as they sit and talk over old times together, we might, if we were listening, hear him say: "Old chap, I can't never forgive myself for not owning up. I was a coward and a cad, but if remorse is punishment, then I have known something of it after all! And to think you did all that for me! I can't never thank you enough."

And the thought comes again—have we, from our hearts, ever thanked the Lord Jesus for what He has done for us?

If not, let us do it now.

MARY ALISON

## Strong Tea

By LUCY LAING

"NO, Mrs. Smithers, it is useless my prescribing medicine for you, because you will never lose that pain until you give up tea-drinking. I assure you it is poison in your case."

The old lady whimpered.

"Well, doctor," she answered with a sniff, "it is hard on a poor old body to give up her cup of tea at seventy-five."

The doctor smiled.

"How many cups a day, Mrs. Smithers?" he asked whimsically.

She put her head on one side.

"Let me see. One, two, three, four, five! Not more than five all told, doctor."

"Umph! five? and *not* weak, I'll be bound?"

"Well, no, doctor; I must say as how I likes to see a bit of colour in it."

"Judging from results, I should not doubt it," he replied. "Anyway, this strong tea drinking is a poisonous habit, Mrs. Smithers. Try to break yourself of it. You have plenty of pluck, although you are seventy-five."

And then he wished her good-day and laughingly left her.

\* \* \* \*

It was some weeks later, and Dr. Smart was passing Mrs. Smithers' cottage. The old lady was in her garden tending her flowers.

"Why, Mrs. Smithers," he said, "you look simply splendid; how is the indigestion pain?"

"Gone, doctor!" she beamed.

"Good! And the tea?"

"That's gone too!"

"Splendid, splendid! Plucky, too, by jove. How did you manage it?"

The old lady walked down to the gate.

"It was like this, doctor," she explained; "my young grandson, Tommy Field—he's a smart lad is Tommy—started by making the word 'habit' out of his box of letters what I gave him for Christmas, and that's what began it. He said to me, 'Granny, there's five letters in it, and that will stand for five cups of tea a day.'"

"I don't quite understand, Mrs. Smithers," said the doctor, looking somewhat mystified by the old lady's explanation.

"Well, sir, see here; the word 'habit' has five letters, ain't it?"

"That is so, Mrs. Smithers."

"Well, I said to 'em indoors, 'I'm going to knock off one cup of tea a day,' and that young sauce-box Tommy ses, 'There's still "abit" left, Granny!' Just fancy the impudence," laughed the old lady, although well pleased all the same.

"And then he pointed out, 'If you leave off two cups there's "bit," and if you leave off three there's still "it," and if you leave off four there's still "t." So you must do away with 'em all, Granny,' he ses. Did you ever hear the like of that, sir? What we have to put up with with the younger generation nowadays!"

The doctor laughed heartily.

"Sometimes they are wiser than us older folks, eh, Mrs. Smithers?" he said slyly. "That grandson of yours will make his way in the world one of these days. So glad you are better. Keep it up. Good-bye!"



# Was it Failure?

NOTHING in St. Paul's journeyings was more romantic or more wonderful than the vision that came to him at Troas. It was there that he saw the Man of Macedonia summoning him to the conquest of a new continent. He obeyed the vision: crossed from Asia to Europe: and was almost immediately clapped in gaol!

It really seemed as though, in following the beckoning hand, he had exchanged his triumphal progress on one continent for the most ignominious failure on another. Let any one read the sixteenth chapter of Acts, and he will be startled by the contrast between the glory with which it opens and the gloom into which it plunges. It opens with the thrill of conquest. "The churches were established in the faith and increased in number daily." Then comes the Vision, the call to Europe, the voyage across the straits; and, following hard upon all this, bonds and imprisonment! It looks like a hideous blunder, a tragic mistake.

But it only *looks* like it! For the work of Paul and Silas was neither stopped nor interrupted by their sojourn in the dungeon. They sang praises unto God *and the prisoners heard them*. The prisoners in that gaol were about the only people in Philippi whom the evangelists, on entering the city, had no hope of reaching. Their imprisonment furnished them with an audience that they had never dreamed of address-

ing. The Gospel that Paul had come to Europe to preach was brought under the notice of these prisoners in such a way that they could never forget it. Could the most hardened of them ever forget the happenings of that memorable night?

The gaoler, too; and his family! What a night that was with them! I like to think that when Paul wrote his *Epistle to the Philippians*—the most glow-

ing and affectionate of all his letters—he had in his mind's eye the faces of the gaoler and several of the prisoners. It certainly *looked* like failure when, so soon after entering the city, the two evangelists were thrown into

the inner dungeon. But, in reality, it was the foretaste of their triumph. With the harsh closing of their cell door, the gates of Europe were thrown open for the victories of the Gospel.

It looked like *the end*. When, by express order of the magistrates, a preacher is sent to gaol his opportunities *seem* to have vanished: his life-work is closed. It *looks* like it: but every day of our lives we come to what we regard as the end of a thing, and are astonished afterwards to find that, in reality, it was only the beginning.

I write a cheery letter, or I pay a friendly visit, or I bring back the sunshine to the clouded face of a disappointed child; and I dismiss the matter from my mind, supposing *that* to be the end of it. Or, on the other hand, I show ill-temper, or I utter a biting

## FOR THE NEW YEAR

Could we fear so for the future,  
Meeting trouble oft half way,  
If upon the heavenly Father  
All our care was cast each day?

If we realised His wisdom,  
Tenderness, and wondrous love,  
Should we not cast every burden  
On that loving One above?

"As thy day so shall thy strength be"  
Is a promise to us given,  
And true will be proved that promise  
Till earth is exchanged for Heaven.

M. CORNELL





In the Dungeon at Philippi

[From the painting by Harold Copping]



## Was it Failure ?

sarcasm, or I tell a little child that I have no time for him to-day. And, once more, I forget all about it, fancying *that* to be the end of it.

It is never the end. *That*, the Master said, will be the supreme and universal astonishment of the life to come. "Lord," men will cry, "when saw we Thee sick and visited Thee?" or "Lord, when saw we Thee sick and visited Thee not?" They had done it—or had *not* done it—and had dis-

missed the matter from their minds, imagining *that* to be the end of it. But what seems to be the *end* of a thing is invariably the *beginning* of a thing. Paul and Silas learned that day at Philippi that what looked like the end of their usefulness was in reality the beginning of their triumph. And they learned on another day—their last day—that what seems like the end of life is but *the beginning of the life everlasting*.

F. W. BOREHAM

## Our Leader

**T**HERE is a touching story of a valiant Highland chieftain, who fell mortally wounded at the battle of Prestonpans. Seeing his clan waver, to the advantage of the enemy, at the sight of his collapse, he raised himself upon his elbow, regardless of the gushing stream of blood that was ebbing his life away, and cried—

"I am not dead, my men! I am looking upon you, to see you do your duty!"

Whereupon the gallant clansmen charged again upon the foe, with redoubled courage and victorious effect.

But the Captain of our Salvation is neither dead nor dying. When we remember, when we think of Him, it is of One who has life in Himself, and has life, not only for Himself, but for His people too. Hence St. Paul's gospel does not tell us merely—"Your fortunes can never seem lower

than Christ's once seemed; yet He conquered. Therefore never despair."

No; but St. Paul's gospel goes much further than this. What it presents is not comforting facts merely, and consoling considerations resting upon them, but a loving Friend, a living Redeemer, who is Surety to us for good—Himself holding out to us the fruits of conquest which are the guerdon of His death-won victory.

Christ lives! Therefore in the battle, discerning Him our Leader, we bless His name, and wax valiant in the fight.

Christ lives! Therefore in the race, as we keep looking unto Jesus, we gain staying power to hold on to the end. Christ lives! Therefore, though we may be sometimes weary, we need not and will not

faint. For He lives, and is our Life: and, by His enabling grace, we shall yet rejoice together with Him in the great Harvest Home.

### SOMEBODY FINE !

Don't think you're of little importance—  
You're somebody—somebody fine!  
However you tumble and get up and stumble,  
You're part of a vision divine.

Don't think what you do doesn't matter;  
Don't fancy that nobody heeds;  
For, noble or lowly, we're meant to be holy  
In thoughts and in words and in deeds.

'Tis false to imagine you're nothing.  
There's one thing that's perfectly clear—  
You're meant for some work you've no business to shirk,  
Or else—well, you wouldn't be here.

LILIAN GARD



# LIGHT IN THE HOME

No. 38, NEW SERIES

FEBRUARY, 1925



Is it worth it?

*Registered at the General Post Office, London, for transmission by Canadian and Newfoundland Magazine Post*



# Made New Again

IN passing along the streets we often see a notice in a shop window. "Old suits turned, pressed and cleaned as new."

We are living in the days when almost everything we use can be renovated and made fit for service again. Only a few years ago things apparently worn out were discarded and thrown on the rubbish heap; nowadays we give these a fresh lease of life by renovation. I want to tell you the story of an old teapot.

Many years ago this teapot was a beautiful shining article, a real thing of beauty when it came from the works in Sheffield, where it was made, fit to grace the tea-table of the most fastidious lady that ever presided over the cup that cheers.

In course of time, through constant use the silver came off the more prominent parts, and it began to look a very patchy sort of an object; while the inside became badly stained with a brown deposit.

When it began to look too shabby and disreputable to grace the table any longer, it was thrown into the lumber room amongst a lot of other things, where it got badly bruised and battered.

The spout was knocked backwards, the handle sent all crooked, the lid bent so out of shape that it would not fit the hole that was made for it, and there it lay, neither useful nor ornamental, for many a long day.

One day this old, almost forgotten, dilapidated teapot was brought out amongst other goods to be thrown on the scrap-heap, when the owner had the happy thought of trying to get it renovated.

A journey was made to central London, where a number of business houses make a speciality of renovating articles of this kind, and here it was taken in hand. Let us take a final look at the old pot ere it makes its journey through the factory.

Here it is—bruised, battered, broken, corroded inside with tannin from the tea—the outside covered with rust and dirt. Certainly not a thing of beauty; some folks would throw it away and have done with it, despairing of ever seeing it again like it was when new. But the man at the works thinks otherwise.

Now it starts its journey through the factory. First it is passed through a hot alkaline solution to loosen the dirt, and then through a strong acid solution to remove the rust. Soon the metal of which it is made makes its appearance,

but it still retains the bruises, the bent spout, the unshapely lid, the twisted handle.

Now it must go to the repairing department, where, in the hands of a skilful workman, the bruises are removed, the spout and the handle straightened up, the lid made to fit and all leaks carefully soldered up. Now we see the teapot in shape as when new, but several more processes are necessary yet.

Its next step is to the polishing shop, where in the hands of another skilful workman all the scratches and marks are carefully polished out until it is as smooth and free from scratches as a piece of plate glass.

Now it is taken to the plating department, where after being carefully cleaned and freed from grease, a coating of pure silver is deposited upon it, and when taken from the plating bath it is perfectly white inside and out. There is not a spot (if the process has been carefully carried out) that is not covered with pure virgin silver.

The finishing process must now begin and in the burnishing department with the aid of special steel tools it is carefully rubbed all over until it assumes a bright polished appearance, and in the end again assumes the beauty it had when new.

What a transformation! the old battered, dirty, corroded pot—made fit again to grace the table of the most particular; in a word—Renovated! made again as new.


When we examine ourselves in the light of God's Word and His revelation in Jesus Christ we may be tempted to despair and to think we are only fit for the scrap-heap, to take our place amongst the "have beens" but never to be again.

But stop a moment ere you rush to a rash conclusion. If the teapot in its old dirty state is a picture of your life, it can also be a perfectly true picture in relation to its Renovation.

Jesus Christ, the wonderful Saviour, is the Great Renovator of humanity; He will cleanse away all the stain and corrosion, for the *Blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth from all sin.*

The bruises in your life caused by contact with evil He can take out; the scratches, marks and scars will all disappear under His kindly touch, for "He will restore the years the caterpillar hath eaten," and what is more, He will clothe you in the Robe of His own Righteousness as the teapot was clothed with pure silver.

JAS. A. SMITH



# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village

by Amos E. Denner

## Joseph Snell's Story

**A** PART from any knowledge of the circumstances that had drawn Joseph Snell from far Canada to tell his story, the setting in old Granny Whitlock's cottage on the night of the blizzard would have furnished a picture interesting enough to quicken the heart of any artist.

The old lady in her cap with strings, her shoulders covered with a neat, useful shawl, sat on one side of the large fireplace. Usually her knitting needles clicked busily, but to-night knitting was out of the question, as eagerly and wonderingly she listened to the tale of the man sitting opposite.

The room itself was beautifully clean, and there was such an air of cosy homeliness about the place that it was no wonder the people of Moortor spoke of "Sunny View" and its inhabitant as "just a little bit of heaven."

Everything associated with the cottage, even to the fine old oak ceiling with its great uneven beams that shone dark with age, and the floor of square flag-stones covered with generous widths of coco-matting, and set off with a thick rug made of cuttings of black cloth with central scarlet design, seemed to suggest restful comfort, and to reflect the character of the one intimately bound up with the place.

A rare oak dresser, splendidly solid and well made, took up one side of the room. On its shelves was to be seen an array of old china

that would have made some collectors dance with delight, and hanging in such a position that the firelight was reflected in its battered shining face, was a long-handled copper warming-pan. Granny Whitlock still used this quaint old bed-warmer; it did its work far too well to be discarded.

Standing majestically alone in a corner was the finest grandfather clock in Moortor. Its carving was remarkable, and its solemnly important tick was only eclipsed when its droning, preparatory "gur-r-r" gave warning of the hour about to be slowly struck.

"As I've already told you, Mary," said Joseph Snell brokenly, but trying to settle to his task like a man undertaking the greatest thing in his life: "I've come home to tell you the truth. The one thing I seek most of all is your forgiveness, but should I fail to obtain it, I want you to know that even then I am not sufficiently punished for the vile sin which I did to you and yours in the past."

Here the man hesitated, and the old lady was about to speak, but the visitor out of the blizzard held up his hand protestingly.

"Hear my wretched story first," he said. "God knows 'tis a bitter task for me to tell it, but afterwards you can say or do as you like to me. . . . I've come across the ocean for this. If I'd been less of a coward I should have returned to Moortor years before. But I've always allowed things to stand in the way. Even to-day, the wind and snow nearly proved an obstacle. . . . But 'tis New Year's Day . . . the anniversary of your widowhood, and every New Year's Day I've been as a worm writhing in fire."

For a while Joseph Snell was unable to proceed, so great was the stress of his emotion. He sat



## Moortor Folk

gazing into the flames, and the only sound to be heard was the angry battle of the snow-swept elements outside. Suddenly, with an effort, he went on:

"They say a jealous man is twice mad, Mary. . . . God knows I've proved the truth of this. The biggest blow to my pride was that day when you refused my offer of marriage in favour of Matthew Whitlock. All that was evil in me rose against my rival. I imagined that he had stolen your affections. . . . Fool that I was not to have seen that you never really cared for me. . . . I grew to hate the very sight of your husband, and from the moment of your marriage I determined to wreak my revenge.

"Then came the day of that pony 'drive,' and I found myself alone with Matthew on a quiet part of the moor. This was the chance I had been waiting for. We rode together for a while, then, suddenly, I struck at the legs of your husband's horse with a whip. It was a mean trick. I've lived it over in torment a thousand times since, though 'twas only a matter of seconds then. Quicker than I'm speaking, the frightened animal completed my wicked work. Matthew was thrown violently against a boulder, and, cowardly brute that I was, I galloped off to rejoin the main party, leaving your husband to lie there helpless, and maybe dead."

Here the visitor covered his face with his



"I galloped off . . . leaving your husband to lie there helpless, and maybe dead"

## Moortor Folk

hands. Great choking sobs shook his stalwart frame, and it seemed that the pent-up anguish and remorse of a life tragedy had burst its barriers at last. There was something pathetic in the tears of this tardy penitent, as he bowed and wrestled with the deep things of a wounded spirit, and small wonder that Granny Whitlock herself struggled with an emotion that was likely to become overpowering. The tears coursed their silent way down her sweet old face, and for a few moments "Sunny View" had become as a place of bemoaning. Then a beautiful thing happened, for the woman whose life Joseph Snell had so sadly robbed and marred, somehow found it in her heart to forgive the wrong-doer.

"Don't fret any more, Joseph," she said bravely. "It hurts to see you in this way. We're both getting on to the land and time when all life's ills shall be done with."

Truly, grace has a sweet way of its own in the experience of those who come under its gentle sway, and because one of the glories of the Divine Mercy is that it is from everlasting to everlasting, those who share its gracious beneficence are enabled to be merciful too.

Thus, when dear old Granny Whitlock bent over the stricken man, and whispered the words his soul had longed and craved for, Joseph Snell murmured a fervent "Thank God!" and into his troubled heart there came a gentle healing balm.

And although outside the violence of the blizzard showed no signs of decreasing, yet what mattered this? for in the heart of a repentant sinner God was making the outgoings of the evening to rejoice.

"Folk took me to be a wonderful generous fellow when I made you a present of 'Sunny View' years ago," said Joseph Snell a little later when he had become more composed; "but they little knew I did it as a salve to my already troubled conscience. And I left for Canada immediately afterwards, because I couldn't bear to see you and your baby boy in your cruel loneliness. . . . By the way, what has become of the lad?"

"He went to Canada too," came the quiet answer from old Granny Whitlock.

"And doing well, I'll be bound," said Joseph Snell. "He couldn't help but prosper with such a mother. . . . My own farm overseer is from the Homeland. . . . He's a regular good chap. I can trust him with everything, just as you would your own boy."

But if Granny Whitlock made no answer to

this, it was because every heart knoweth its own bitterness, and there are times when silence offers the only relief.

An hour later, Joseph Snell took his departure from "Sunny View." He had previously booked rooms at the "Heather Bell," the Moortor hostelry, where he had left his luggage before going to see old Granny Whitlock.

But the man never reached his place of lodging. Instead, he must have taken a wrong turning, probably owing to the blinding blizzard that raged with ceaseless fury.

Ten days afterwards, when the deep snow-drifts had disappeared from the face of the moor, the frozen body of the man from Canada was found lying near the very boulder where, years before, had happened the tragedy that had turned, for him, his life into a weary, fruitless effort to escape the lashings of a guilty conscience.

And only Granny Whitlock knew that at the end he had found a place of repentance. But she kept the matter in her heart. It was much too sacred a thing to be spoken of, even in such a quiet village as Moortor.

*(To be continued.)*

## Odds and Ends

It is good to think well; it is divine to act well.

\* \* \* \*

*It depends on us.*—If we go out among people in a fighting spirit, we find such in those we meet. But if we go forth in a charitable frame of mind, with goodwill in our hearts towards all, we find that most other people will meet us in the same spirit.

\* \* \* \*

Quite frequently we find people imagining that if they were doing the will of God they would be serving Him in some conspicuous position, but the teaching of the Scriptures is that if one is filled with the Spirit of God he will first of all be called to serve Christ in his own home. The early disciples had to preach at home in Jerusalem first, then Judea, then Samaria, and finally the uttermost parts of the earth. Love and other virtues begin at home.

\* \* \* \*

No one is too young to stand against that which he knows to be wrong.



# Around the Fire

ARE there any empty chairs around our fire to-night? Let us try and get them all occupied—empty chairs are wasted chairs—then draw around nearer to the cheery blaze, and let us find what pictures we may in the fire. The first one that comes to my mind, perhaps recalled to me by that opening sentence, is of a mother, a reserved, sorrowful woman, who had lost her only daughter, a beautiful young girl, in a particularly sad and tragic way.

The pretty bedroom, with all its girlish treasures, was kept just as she had left it, just as it would look if Helen might be expected back home to-morrow. Two, three years, had gone by, and nobody but that mother had ever stepped within that room, only her fingers dusted the pictures and the pretty cretonne-cushioned chair, or touched the pillows on the dainty white bed. And all the while her heart, that had been so warm and kindly in the old days before her loss, seemed to be cold and dead within her, and no ray of sunshine pierced the cloud of grief that had settled down over her life.

Then, one morning—it was in early spring, when birds were twittering in the hedges, and everywhere the old brown earth was sending up delicate shoots of green—there came a knocking at the door. And when the sad-hearted woman opened it, there stood a young girl—such a thin white-faced slip of a girl, looking as though she might have just risen from a sick-bed, which indeed she had.

“Can you tell me, please,” she inquired, “where Mrs. Mason, Mrs. John Mason, lives? I know it is along this road somewhere, but I can’t just remember the house.”

“Mrs. John Mason, child? I am sure I cannot tell where you will find her; she moved away from here more than a year ago.”

A look of disappointment and dismay came into the girl’s face, and she looked so forlorn, standing there with her shabby little travelling bag, that Mrs. Stanley broke through the reserve of years, and said kindly, “Won’t you like to come in and rest for a little while? Tell me what the trouble is, perhaps I can help you.”

Something about the young stranger appealed to her mother-heart, and when she had seated her in a comfortable rocking-chair, she soon learned her story. The poor child was an

orphan girl, who had fallen ill while working in a large store in the near-by city. When well enough to be discharged from the hospital to which she had been sent, she found herself too weak to take her place behind the counter again, and with what little remained of her savings she had come out to this quiet country village. Years ago, in the happy days gone by when her parents were alive, they had all spent a wonderful summer holiday in the boarding house kept by the good-hearted Mrs. Mason.

“I do not eat so very much,” she explained; “and I thought that perhaps she would have a small cheap room, so that I could afford to stay for a week or two in this good country air, until I was strong enough to go to work again.”

That her story was true, one could not doubt, and, while listening to her refined, low-pitched voice, a great struggle was going on in Mrs. Stanley’s mind.

“Take her in,” something or some one seemed to say; “let her have Helen’s room, you will never regret it, and Helen would be glad.”

“Oh, I can’t, I can’t,” and much as she pitied her, she shrank from the thought of this strange girl sleeping in Helen’s bed, sitting in Helen’s chair. And the struggle went on, while she busied herself making a cup of refreshing tea, cutting thin delicate slices of home-made bread and butter.

“Oh, you should not go to so much trouble for me,” protested the girl, as tears came in her eyes. “But you are just like my mother; that is exactly what *she* would have done for a stranger. I think all good mothers must be alike.”

I think I need not tell you that the stranger slept in Helen’s bed that night, and for many nights, and the heart of the kind woman who had taken her in was filled with a wonderful glow of gladness. She, who had hugged her grief so long, and had never expected to feel happy again, was blest and comforted.

We have all our sacred spots, our tender memories, our vacant places, but let us not grow selfish and self-centred: other hearts are aching, other hearts are lonely too; and if we can cheer another one along life’s lonely way, do a good turn to a needier brother, help another one to smile, our own burden will be lightened, and we shall be building a memorial that will endure for eternity, better than any shaft of granite or marble that we can raise.

LIZZIE KINGS

# Why Jim Nares Started Afresh

By ELEANOR CLARE

THE row of cottages with their many-coloured roofs of thatch, red tile and slate looked on to the Creek; but behind the cottages, stretching for miles, was marshland, with a few ploughed fields scattered here and there.

One particular day in February, when big clouds like cotton-wool drifted across the sky, a frail young woman in a red tam and brown mackintosh was choosing the driest footway along the edge of a rising slope of coarse grass just past the cottages, when she noticed a heap of coins near a fishing-boat that was laid up for repair.

She picked one up. It looked like a two-shilling piece: "but of course it couldn't be," she said to herself. "It couldn't be real money! Two shillin' bits weren't so plentiful to be lyin' about like that. Anyway, I'll keep it for luck."

A few minutes later she reached the part where the road was divided by a lane. At the corner of the lane was the new red-brick public house, the side door of which was open.

She was about to peep in when the sound of her husband's voice followed by a loud burst of laughter made her shrink back, and there was an added wistfulness in her large childlike eyes as she thought of his promise to come straight home on Saturdays with his money.

At the top of the lane was the church; but it had no interest for her now, for they had long since left off going. As she had not the courage to enter the public house, she hastened back, knowing that if she did not return soon she would have to go a long way round, for the tide was coming in; the great mud-holes were fast filling with water.

No one was about, for it was the hour for the midday meal. Her cottage door opened on to the Creek; and the fire she had banked up with potato peelings and tea-leaves burned brightly.

As she listened for the unsteady step of her husband, she prepared the table for dinner; and when he entered, about ten minutes later, she went on listlessly performing the duty of pouring onion sauce over the fish. Not a word was said.

Jim Nares, a boat repairer, formed a strong contrast to his fair-haired wife, with his broad shoulders and ruddy complexion. A jovial, good-natured man when he was sober, but quiet and morose when in drink.

Betty knew he was not to be reasoned with until he had slept off the effects of the drink, so she just busied herself about the house; and it was not until the water bubbled in the kettle for an early cup of tea that he stretched himself and yawned.

"What have you got your hat on for?" he asked, watching her fill the teapot with water.

"I must do some shoppin', Jim. I've been waitin' ever so long for you to open your eyes. I want some money."

"I haven't got any!" he exclaimed. "I've lost it."

"You mean you've spent it at the public house!" she retorted.

"No, Betty; really I haven't."

And she knew that he spoke the truth, for in spite of his weakness for the drink, Jim always spoke the truth.

"You were there! I heard your voice! Then there was a lot of laughter."

"They were laughing because I said I'd lost my money. They didn't believe me."

"Oh, whatever shall we do?" she murmured, pressing her thin hands on the arms of her low rocking-chair. "Where did you lose it?"

"Well; if I knew that, I'd have it now, wouldn't I?" He smiled whimsically, and Betty thought how happy they would be if he were always sober.

"Now if this had only been a real two shillin' bit," she said, taking the coin from her pocket and handing it to him, "it 'ud have helped us over to-morrow. On Tuesday I'll have some money for Mrs. James' washing."

"I don't want ye to go out to wash, my lass. If you'd only meet me every Saturday I'd give you the money before I—before I've time to spend it."

"But you haven't spent it to-day, Jim; you've lost it."

"It 'ud have been all the same if I hadn't."

He sighed, took the coin from her and examined it. He bit it, rang it on the table and looked at it closer.

"If it's real there's lots more where it comes from!" she exclaimed eagerly.

"Then why to goodness didn't you pick it all up? It is real! Where did you find it?"

"On the Creek by Dobson's boat. Then there's shillin's and sixpences an' half-crowns maybe, for I didn't look very close. How





"I was helping Dobson to push the boat away from a mud-hole"

could I think it was real money lyin' about like that? They looked like a lot of dirty old coins."

"They're mine, I be bound. They must have come out o' my pocket while I was helping Dobson to push the boat away from a mud-hole. The tide won't have reached it," he added, rising quickly as he spoke and striding across the small room to get his coat and cap from the peg.

He went out into the dusk and she followed. When he saw matches and a candle in her hand he grunted approval. He knew the Creek—all the dangerous little places where one tripped up—better than she, so he linked her arm through his. Once he had to put his arm round her, for she stumbled.

When they were a few yards from the boat she ran to the place where she expected to pick up the money; but he quickly overtook her. They searched diligently, but in vain. Some one else had evidently been there before them.

As Betty trudged homewards carrying the candle, she could not help thinking of the parable she once knew by heart: "If a woman lose a

piece of silver, does she not search for it with a candle, and how great is her joy when she finds it." How did it go exactly? It bothered her that she could not remember. It had something to do with the Kingdom of Heaven. She wished she could ask Jim; but somehow he seemed to have lost faith in all that, and she was afraid he would not take her remark seriously.

He broke in upon her thoughts when they reached the cottage.

"Give me that two-shilling piece, Betty. I'll buy what's wanted if you just tell me what to get. You look so pale. Just sit by the fire till I come back."

"If I'd known this was real I could have gone this afternoon," she said, handing him the money and explaining what he should buy. "Go out at the backway; it's nearest the butcher's, and you'll just be in time before he shuts up shop. The basket's on the scullery table."

As soon as Jim left the house, Betty sat and pondered over the parable of the candle and the lost piece of money. Her Bible, a wedding present from her Sunday school teacher, two

## Why Jim Nares Started Afresh

years ago, lay on the top of the cupboard in the recess. It was never opened these days because they thought they knew all about it.

Hadn't she taken first prize in Sunday school for the greatest number of attendances? and wasn't Jim able to explain that Jonah couldn't have been in a whale three whole days? And because of these things he could explain there seemed no need for the Book.

She rose, reached it from the shelf and turned to the Gospels. She read the headings until she came to the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke; and there was the parable at the eighth and ninth verses: "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."

The words stood out with such authority, so different from the magazines she had been reading lately, that almost before she was aware she had dropped by the side of the table and clasped her hands:

After repeating the Lord's Prayer in a low, broken voice, she began to pour out her troubles; and Jim, coming through the scullery, heard his wife lovingly, beseechingly breathe his name in prayer.

She knelt beneath the lamp and the light fell like a halo on her bent head. Her delicate features were transformed. She looked like an angel, thought Jim, as he stood in the doorway, the basket on his arm.

He felt that a miracle had happened. And a miracle had happened. Prayer had brought her soul into contact with God Himself. The moon filled the little scullery with cold clear light. He placed the basket on the table close by, without taking his eyes away from that kneeling figure; and the falling of a tear on his involuntarily clasped hands was surely registered in heaven, for a wonderful peace came over him—a peace that is not of this world.

She rose from her knees and saw him; she felt that he had joined her in prayer. But not a word was said. There was no need for it. The open Bible was still on the table. She turned to the verses once more before closing the Book; and Jim, putting his arm round her, leaned over her shoulder as she traced the words with her finger. She read them softly, earnestly.

"Yes, but read on, dearie," he said with emotion; "read the tenth verse."

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the

presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.'

"I am that sinner, Betty, to-night. If you knew just how I felt as I stood there! I can't speak of it. We're going to start afresh from now."

Betty sighed contentedly as she nestled her head against his shoulder.

The following morning when breakfast was over, she went upstairs to get ready for church. She glanced out of the casement window upon the lovely view of the Creek. The tide was out. There was a beautiful blue sky and the sun shone brightly.

Sunbeams sparkling on the water were a joy to see. Or was it that her mind this morning was in tune with all that is beautiful because Jim and she had begun afresh?

She had left Jim shaving in the kitchen, or she would have called him to ask what the sunbeam was shining on. But now she heard his step on the stairs. He was coming to get ready for church.

"What's that sunbeam sparklin' on, Jim?" she asked, as soon as he entered the room.

"I don't know! I'll go down and have a look," he replied, gazing in the direction she pointed.

A few minutes later, Jim went down the steep staircase and made his way towards the object on which the sun still glistened. Betty stood at the door, and, waving to a passing friend, told her about the lost money and how they had searched with a candle, like it said in the parable; but before she reached the end, the next door neighbour joined them.

Betty could not bring herself to speak of what Jim had said when she read the tenth verse; that was too sacred. She was telling, however, how she had picked up the two-shilling piece and walked on when they heard a footstep approach.

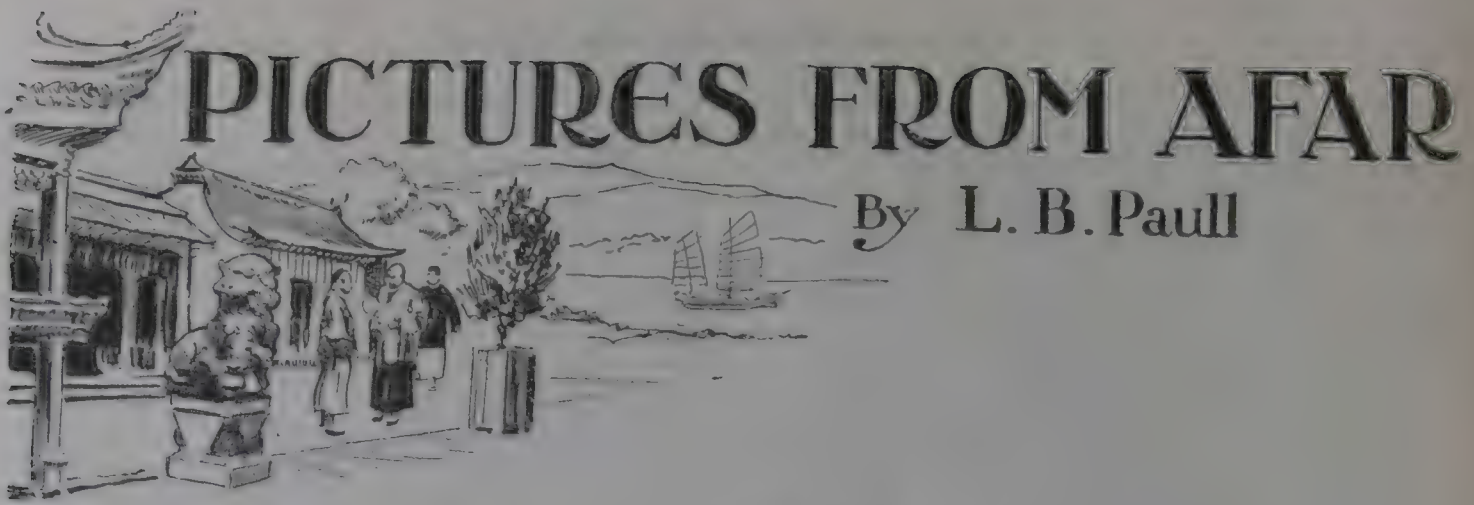
"Look? I have found that which was lost!" Jim exclaimed, unconscious for the moment that he was quoting Scripture.

Then the neighbours gathered round and rejoiced; and in a flash there dawned on Jim Nares the real meaning: The lost money—the lost sinner; the neighbours rejoicing—the angels rejoicing.

"We've been treating these Bible truths like you did those coins, Betty; not putting any value on them because they were so near."

Betty's heart was too full; she could not speak. She knew indeed it was so. And as they walked to church Jim Nares marvelled at the Love of God, so great that it was at work in simple human affairs.





## Foot-binding in China

NOT long ago I was talking to some one on this subject when she said: "But that is a thing of the past." This is a view very largely taken by the English people, therefore, some may be startled by the following statement:—

The custom of foot-binding does not obtain in the south of China, nor amongst the Manchus, nor in one tiny village in the north of China, where there was a great fire from which none of the women escaped because of their small feet, but with those exceptions it is done throughout North and Central China, a huge area, and it has never been given up, except where the missionary has worked, and only then in a very few cases. Let me tell you what foot-binding really means.

Just when a little girl gets to the age of six years her mother takes long bandages and binds her feet, the feet on which she has been dancing in all the joy of childhood. They are bound tightly till the toes go to a point, then the bandages are taken off, the bone of the foot is broken and the toes pressed back until they come under the heel so that the foot looks like a closed hand. The bandages are replaced and another time of grinding pain and sleepless nights follows. Then the child is put down on the floor and the mother takes a



stick and beats her to make her run about. "What a cruel mother!" you would say; but the strange thing is that mothers do it who *love* their children. They believe that no girl would get a husband if her feet were left unbound.

In a little village where my daughter works, and where she goes by the name of "teacher-mother," there lives the widow Han. She has a granddaughter with her who was full of life, dancing about the house like a fairy. My daughter often wondered if she would not be too much of a handful for the old granny to manage, but in a later letter she writes: "I need not have wondered, for they began to bind her feet, and afterwards, she crept about like a little old woman with dark lines under her eyes through sleepless nights of pain."

My daughter had treated a baby very successfully for internal abscesses and the mother said:—

"Teacher-mother, how shall I repay you for what you have done?"

"Your little girl is at the age to undergo foot-binding," my daughter answered; "will you let her go free?"

But the mother remained silent, she would not promise. Again and again clothes, pretty shoes, trinkets have been offered to these mothers as bribes; but, though they are by no means slow to accept such things in the ordinary way, nothing will tempt them in this one matter.

How is this to be set right? we ask in dismay. Only through the missionaries who carry on a never-ending battle against this terrible custom. At times they attack it from public places in deadly earnest, at others through house-to-house visitation when they entreat, explain and try to persuade, and again in a lighter mood, which has its place because the people do not resent it as they would a more earnest appeal. As an example of the latter,

## Pictures from Afar

my daughter and her husband were attending a village fête, and soon after entering she was aware that a group of women were talking about her. She drew near and heard one of them whisper to the others: "What big feet she's got!"

"I have," my daughter replied, "they are just as God gave them to me. I can stand on

them for hours without getting tired, and I can turn on them so easily and run so swiftly. I should be ashamed to break and cripple them as you do."

Then, looking at the woman who had first made the remark she added:

"You and I will run a race; but before we start I will tell you which of us will win."

## The Doctor's Lesson

DR. GOLDER stood on the terrace outside his house, and gazed down the hill across the busy town of Haifa, to where the ships lay anchored in the harbour; and still further, across the glistening Bay of Acre, to where the open sea gleamed gold and blue in the evening light.

Then turning, he looked up at the mountain on which his house stood. With summit lifted boldly against the sky, it was in places covered with thick undergrowth, with oaks, myrtles and pines, while the lower slopes were studded with olives, vineyards and orange groves.

How wonderful, mused Dr. Golder, that this should be the very mountain on which Elijah contended with the priests of Baal! How strange it seemed, that not far off was one of the caves in which Obadiah hid the fifty young prophets! For was not this Mount Carmel, and was it not to-day, as its name implied, a veritable "garden land"?

The cool air blowing in from the bay was mingled with the sweet perfume of the orange-groves; but soon another scent began to make itself noticeable—the savoury smell of cooking. This brought Dr. Golder out of his reverie. He was expecting two friends to supper, and among other good things he had procured a fine plump fowl for their meal. No doubt Abdulla the cook-boy was busy making ready. And as he watched, the missionary soon

saw his guests coming up the white winding road, and hastened to meet them.

A little later they were seated at table. But when about to serve the fowl, Dr. Golder paused, knife in hand, while a look of annoyance crossed his face. The fowl had only one leg! Only too well he knew that this was no freak of nature. One leg had been ruthlessly torn off, and he was sure that Abdulla was the culprit. This was not the first time that he had been guilty of petty thefts. Food, cigarettes, even money had been missed, and as the cook-boy, though reprimanded, had never been punished, Dr. Golder was determined that he would teach him a lesson.

He said nothing till the next morning; then he called Abdulla and accused him of the theft. The young man (he was about twenty-five) did not deny the charge.

"Master love chicken," he said bowing, "and behold, Abdulla love it also!"

But "master" was not to be appeased by this. He knew that the cook-boy fed well, and he felt that this dishonest habit must be cured.

"Abdulla," he said sternly, "you know that you had no right to take it. It was not yours,

therefore it was stealing. Now listen. You have done wrong, and wrong-doing must be punished. You may choose whether I shall hand you over to the authorities, or whether I

### NOT EASY!

It isn't always easy to go singing on your way,  
For often there's rough climbing to be done,  
And feet and hands get tired towards the ending of the day,  
And spirits flag at setting of the sun.  
It isn't always easy to show courage every mile;  
The roads are full of ruts and stones—we come to many a stile.  
It needs a lot of grit and pluck to muster up a smile;  
But still I guess you mean to do it—eh?

It takes a bit of real hard work to stretch a helping hand,  
For folks aren't always those we'd choose to meet,  
And some have nasty petty ways we cannot understand,  
And some have tempers torrid in their heat!  
But still, if travellers are tired you're bound to lift their packs;  
You hate to think that plodders near have weary aching backs;  
You try to gauge another's need and give him what he lacks—  
It somehow makes you step with braver feet!

HILARY BROWN



## The Doctor's Lesson

shall punish you myself. Go now, but present yourself before me at noon, then you shall make your choice."

Abdulla bowed low and retired, but he did not feel very happy as he went about his work. At noon, however, he came to the missionary and said, as had been foretold, "Master, I choose that you punish me yourself."

"Very well," said Dr. Golder; "come to me at the hour before sunset. You have done wrong, and the punishment which you deserve is fifteen strokes of the stick."

"Oh master, beat me not!" cried Abdulla. "Indeed, I will no more steal—I——"

"Leave me," said the missionary, "and come again at the time I name."

Knowing what he was about to do, Dr. Golder felt that a little suspense would do Abdulla good. But the cook-boy went about his duties with a more solemn face than ever.

However, at the hour appointed, he presented himself, and again bowing low, protested loudly that he would be faithful in future.

"Wrong-doing deserves punishment," said his master firmly. "You have done wrong, and you deserve fifteen strokes with that," and he pointed to the whip made of crocodile skin. "But," continued the missionary, "because I love you, Abdulla, though you deserve punishment, I am going to bear it for you. Take therefore the whip and let the strokes fall upon my back."

The cook-boy drew back amazed. "Oh no, no, master!" he cried, "I could never do that!"

"Take the whip and do as I tell you," repeated Dr. Golder.

"No, master—oh no! See, let me receive twenty stripes, yes, thirty stripes, rather than that!" pleaded Abdulla, his dark eyes filling with tears.

The missionary took the whip and placed it in his hands. "Now then," he said.

But Abdulla flung it from him, and in an

abandonment of grief and love threw himself weeping at his master's feet.

After a while, Dr. Golder gently raised him. "Come and sit here by me, Abdulla," he said. "Do you know that there is some one Who has done far more for you—and for me too—than anything that I have offered to do? We have all sinned, all done wrong, and the punishment we deserve, God says, is death. But the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, died in our stead, so that we might be forgiven."

Abdulla had heard the old, old story many times before from the lips of his master, but

now the truth came home to him with added force. He saw it now clearly—"Christ had died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

There was no need in the future for the missionary to distrust his cook-boy. The latter loved his master with untiring devotion, and guarded his possessions as if they were his own.

On one occasion, Dr. Golder had charge of a considerable sum of money, and knowing that he must be absent for the night, he was most anxious that it should be put in a place of safety. No such place, however, being available, he remembered Abdulla, and left it in his charge. Returning early the next morning, he found his cook lying asleep on the ground, under a tree near his house. The faithful servant had buried the money there, and all night had slept over his treasure, and so was able to restore it intact to his master.

But better still, not only had Abdulla become an honest man, but he treasures a copy of the New Testament, and though not a very enlightened Christian, he is daily learning to love and to know more of the Lord Jesus Christ, "with Whose stripes we are healed."

MARY ALISON

### THE LITTLE HOME-STREET

It's always so busy. The fishmonger's cart,  
The greengrocer's barrow, the baker-boy's van,  
With motors and bicycles bearing their part,  
All hurry and scurry as fast as they can!  
The houses are colour-washed drab, blue and brown  
In that little home-street at the end of the town.

There's Brown and there's Smith and there's Robinson too  
Inscribed in big letters right over each door.  
On Saturday nights there is quite a to-do,  
For Saturday shoppers from everywhere pour.  
It's such a gay spot as they pass up and down,  
That little home-street at the end of the town!

For each knows the other and chats for a while;  
The neighbours crack jokes and the children play games.  
Those folks may drift citywards many a mile

\* \* \* \* \*  
And build up big fortunes and carve themselves names;  
But shrined in their hearts with a love-lit renown  
Is that little home-street in the little home-town.

LILIAN GARD

\* \* \* \* \*  
Great hearts alone understand how much  
glory there is in being good.

# Jews in Palestine

THERE has been much talk in recent years about the return of the Jews to Palestine, the land of their fathers. Our own country, as ruler of Palestine under the mandate of the League of Nations, has done what it can to encourage this movement.

It is sometimes said that the Zionist movement attracts only a small part of the Jewish people. Still, the number of Jews settling in the country is increasing, and in spite of discouragement they are beginning to reclaim the land from the barren desolation to which Turkish rule had brought it, as may be seen from the following account of a visit to one of these Jewish colonies given by a Finnish lady.

I had driven by the horse-omnibus along the delightful beach-road of Lake Gennesaret, across the bridge that spans the Jordan at the southern end of the Lake, and alighted at a long cypress avenue. This avenue led to a Jewish agricultural colony called Dagania. Fifteen years ago it was a barren, stony desert—now it is a little paradise.

A young Jewess left her washing-tub to be my guide. She and her betrothed had studied medicine in Vienna, when the Zionist enthusiasm took possession of them. They discontinued their studies, went to Palestine, and, settling down at Dagania, married. The husband was at that moment working in a remote field, having taken food for the day with him. The wife had to stay at home, because it was her turn to wash the children's clothes and watch over the youngest ones in the colony.

I saw the dwellings, which were very pretty and cosy. Everything in the household was held in common, as well as the ground.

In some other colonies it is different. Each family cultivates its own ground, and lives separately. Often the colonists have to live a long time in tents, owing to lack of funds for building purposes. They prefer to build brick cow-houses, and stables for the animals, before building houses for themselves.

The young wife led me through the flower-garden and the palm-grove to the vast plantations of eucalyptus, almond, and orange trees. Behind them stretched the root-crop fields, the meadows and the cornfields. On the side of the cattle-yard were the stable for fifteen horses, the byre, where twenty fine cows gave milk—as well for the wants of the colony itself as for

a small dairy—and the hen-house. Everything was in excellent condition.

"Have you an eight hours' working-day here?" I inquired.

My guide smiled as she replied, "From sunrise to sunset we work. We cannot do with less. It is certainly rather much; and our spirit, too, thirsts, so we use the evenings and often far into the night for reading, lectures, and discussions. We know that all that uses up our health, but what is to be done?"

To the little burying-place many had been carried during the years of the colony's existence. Malaria, which is prevalent, had taken many victims. One of the founders of the colony, a noble young man, was drowned in the Lake by the upsetting of his boat in a whirlwind. Another youth had ridden to Tiberias for medicine for a patient, and on the way he was attacked by Bedouin robbers. Defending himself, he was shot.

"Do you not repent of having come here?" I asked.

"No, I do not," was the reply. "Here I hope to be able to educate my children to be nobler men than under European conditions."

She said this with a sad expression. Why that? She was living in the land of her fathers, but had lost faith in the God of her fathers. In Dagania there was no synagogue; the colonists were free-thinkers.

I drew the attention of my guide to the splendour of scenery all around, and asked, "Do you indeed not believe that God created all that?"

"Some do, others do not," she answered.

"Then you have lost all religion?"

"I think every one has something—I have; but no dogmas—something like what Jesus taught."

I was astonished. She continued: "Jesus was a great prophet whom His age did not understand. We admire Him, we do not adore Him; we adore no one. But if we had a God, we should kneel before Jesus."

"That you will do some day," I said. She did not reply; but I understood what a missionary among them had said to me: "Many of the younger Jews have lost their faith in the old traditions, and with that, unfortunately, also their faith in God; but they do not hate the Messiah of Israel as do the older Jews; in their hearts is a great yearning."



# Miss Thorpe's Cardboard Boxes

"IT'S so tiresome having nowhere to keep my things," said Miss Thorpe to herself, as she tried to dovetail a cardboard box between five others under her bed. "The wardrobe won't hold any more and the chest of drawers is full too. Thank goodness, there's only one more box to do."

Miss Thorpe made it a rule to look over her many possessions every spring and autumn, to sprinkle the woollen clothes, etc., with Keating's powder and put them all back again. As she sometimes bought new things and never got rid of her old ones it was no wonder that in the limited space of two rooms her belongings became a very real nuisance. Having got down a large box from the top of the wardrobe she proceeded to look over its contents.

"How well I remember buying this!" she thought, as she took out a bright crimson dress. "Harry Price said that red was his favourite colour for a dress, so I bought this. It cost no end, being such a good cloth, and I'd no sooner got it than he married a Quakeress. I never cared to wear it after that."

A tap on the door interrupted Miss Thorpe's meditations, and Mrs. Steer her landlady entered, she had evidently been crying.

"Oh, ma'am," she said, "my sister's house was burnt out last night, and they've lost everything. It's a wonder they weren't all killed. The three children were in bed when it began, but she and her husband snatched them out, wrapped them up in blankets and they all went to a friend's in the next street. They'd only been out of their house a few minutes when the roof fell in."

"My sister is coming to-morrow

with the children and she'll leave them with me, but she must go back and try to get a home of some sort ready for them. She'll have to do it all herself as her husband's leave is up to-night. It just breaks my heart to think of her! Now, ma'am, I knew you were turning out your boxes, and I wondered if there was anything you could spare that would come in for the children? The poor little things have only borrowed clothes to wear."

Miss Thorpe's eyes were full of tears as she handed her crimson dress to Mrs. Steer.

"Will you care to have this for the children?" she asked.

Mrs. Steer hardly knew how to express her gratitude.

"Oh, ma'am, what a beautiful dress! So warm and such a very wide skirt. There's plenty to make a frock each for them—they're so young, and small for their age. I don't know how to thank you."

"And your sister, what clothes has she?" inquired Miss Thorpe.

"Just what she stands up in: she hadn't gone to bed," replied the landlady.

"Well, Mrs. Steer, I know there are some more things in my boxes that would be of use to your sister and the children, but I'm too tired to look over them again. Will you take them down and see what you think would come in for them?"

With heartfelt thanks Mrs. Steer carried the boxes off and before long she was up again.

"I hardly like to say it, ma'am, but I've looked over all the things and my sister would be able to make use of every one, and she'd be most thankful for them; but it seems too much to ask."

## Miss Thorpe's Cardboard Boxes

"No, I should like her to have them, it's so dreadful for her to have lost everything," said Miss Thorpe with genuine pity.

A few days later she had a visit from three delighted little girls who entered hand in hand to show their pretty red

frocks; and she was filled with happiness far greater than their own, for she had now learned from experience how true were the words of the Lord Jesus, Who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

FANNY WALLER

## Stephen's Three Insurance Policies

**D**ID you ever hear of old Stephen Holloway? He was once a rich man, and God made him a poor man—so poor that he entered the workhouse. There in the workhouse he became a witness for God, and soul after soul was brought to God through him. As he drew near his death his heart was full of the glory of God, and the clergyman of the parish came to pay him a visit.

"Can I do anything for you, Stephen?" asked the vicar.

"Oh yes, sir; would you mind opening my strong box and showing me my three insurance policies?"

"But have you three insurance policies, you that are—allow me to say it—dependent on the parish?"

"Yes, sir, I have, and you will find them in my strong box, and I would like to read them over again."

"Where is your strong box?"

"There," said Stephen, "in that two-shilling Bible—that is my strong box."



A Donkey Ploughing Team in Essex



## Stephen's Three Insurance Policies

"And what are your insurance policies?"

"Well," said Stephen, "I will tell you. I have an assurance of life; you will find that life assurance in John xi. 26: 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die; believest thou this?' Have you got that assurance, vicar?"

There was no reply.

"And, sir, I have a second assurance policy: I am assured against all accidents."

"Where is that?"

"Romans viii. 28."

And the vicar read: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called of God according to His purpose in Christ Jesus."

"Oh, sir, that has kept me from all accidents; there never has been an untoward accident to me. My coming into this workhouse was the will of God,

and the glory of the risen Jesus has been in my soul ever since. Blessed be God for this palace of a workhouse!"

"Well, what is your third policy?" inquired the vicar.

"My third policy, sir, is an assurance against fire."

"And where do you get that?"

"I get it in 2 Peter iii. 12, 13: 'Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; but we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.' That is my assurance against future fire."

"You are a happy man," said the vicar.

"That is just what I am," answered Stephen. "Now, when the Lord calls me, I am ready to go; may God bless you, sir, for all your kindness to me."

## An Eastern Tale

THERE went a man from home: and to his neighbours twain

He gave, to keep for him, two sacks of golden grain.

Deep in his cellar one the precious charge concealed;

And forth the other went and strewed it in his field.

The man returns at last—asks of the first his sack:

"Here, take it; 'tis the same; thou hast it safely back."

Unharmed it shows without; but when he would explore

His sack's recesses, corn there finds he now no more:

One half of all therein proves rotten and decayed,

Upon the other half have worm and mildew preyed.

The putrid heap to him in ire he doth return.

Then of the other asks, "Where is my sack of corn?"

Who answered, "Come with me, and see how it has sped"—

And took and showed him fields with waving harvests spread.

Then cheerfully the man laughed out and cried, "This one

Had insight to make up for the other that had none:

"The letter *he* observed, but *thou* the precept's sense;

And thus to thee and me shall profit grow from hence;

In harvest thou shalt fill two sacks of corn for me,

The residue of right remains in full for thee."



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News

[From the painting by H. Henshall]

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# Home Again

"SO it's come to that," said old Joe Smith. He was rather a dour-looking old fellow, but he and his wife Priscilla had seen a good deal of trouble. Their only son had died a few years after his marriage, leaving a son and a daughter to his parents' care. Joe was the village blacksmith, able to do a good day's work in spite of his white hair; and his cottage, with its nice bit of ground, had belonged to his father before him.

The Smith family had been respected in the village for a hundred years, and when Annie Smith, a bright, attractive girl, married Tom Knight, a plasterer, who was not even in regular work, her grandparents felt the blow to their pride deeply. A few months later Knight left the village, taking his wife with him. Annie wrote once or twice, but then her letters ceased.

In the midst of this trouble came another blow. Joe had brought up his grandson to his own trade, and the old couple looked forward to Bert's occupying the cottage after them. But one Bank Holiday Bert Smith went to a garrison town about twenty miles away and did not return. A day or two later came a letter saying that he could not stick life at home any longer, and had joined the army.

Joe, always a man of few words, became more silent than ever, while Priscilla's face became positively sour.

One week the paper gave, among other items, the news that some soldiers of Bert's regiment, more or less excited by drink, had quarrelled with a too-profiteering shopkeeper in the town, and a general row had followed. In the course of it Private Smith had received a severe blow on the head, and had been arrested and taken with others to the police-court.

"So it's come to that," said Joe.

A little later a letter arrived from the police-court missionary. Private Smith had, after great persuasion, given the address of his relatives, and the missionary thought that it would be well if one or both of them could pay him a visit. The blow on the head having proved more severe than was thought at first, the lad had been removed to the infirmary. But for the old folks he seemed quite alone in the world.

"Poor lad," said Priscilla; "I doubt but we were too stiff with him, Joe. We didn't make allowance for young blood."

"I expect you're right," said Joe. "Perhaps if we'd made the home a bit brighter Annie wouldn't have been in such a hurry to leave it either. I wonder where she is now?"

It was a shame-faced young soldier with a bandage over one eye who greeted them as the police-court missionary brought them to his bedside.

"Grandad," he said, "it's very good of you both to come and see me. I don't deserve it. I oughtn't to have left home as I did after your bringing me up and all. Mr. Carford here has been talking to me, and I see now how wrong it was. I'm sorry."

"Say no more, lad," said Joe in a husky voice, taking off his glasses to wipe them. "We've been thinking as how the fault wasn't only on your side. We're old folks, and we didn't make allowance for younger ones. Maybe if the home had been a happier place neither of you would have wanted to leave it."

"It was sheer ungrateful of me, anyhow," said Bert; "and after the way you brought me up, to find myself in a police-court! I wonder you didn't cast me off for ever when you heard of it. To tell the truth I've often wanted to come back home when I had a bit of leave, but after the way I'd behaved, I thought you'd be sure to show me the door."

"You need never have been afraid of that, lad," said Priscilla. "You're our own boy's child, our own flesh and blood. Whatever you'd done you'd have been welcomed with open arms if you'd come back."

"Aye, you would," put in Joe.

"And isn't it a comfort," said Mr. Carford, "that that's just the way that God feels about us! It's never too late to go back to Him, far away as we may have wandered. For the sake of His Son Who died for us, He will forgive all that we have done and take us back. Whoever goes to Him will never be cast out."

And after all Bert went back. It was found that the sight of one eye had been destroyed, and he was no longer wanted in the army, though it did not interfere with his becoming a skilful blacksmith. And to add to the joy of them all there came later a letter from Annie with a photograph of the pretty Canadian home in which she was living. Her husband, seeing no hope of getting on at home, had emigrated and was doing well. And Joe and Priscilla, taught by their own experience, turned once more to the Heavenly Father Whom for so many years they had forgotten. "The Good Shepherd went after His sheep until He found it," said Joe. "Maybe the trouble we've had was His way of bringing us back."



# Thompson's Agent

JOHN CRANDALL sat in the railway carriage, fumbling over his notes. He was going to see Crozier; and, as it was a matter of life or death for his business, and therefore a matter of life or death to himself, he was anxious to put things just right in the interview.

He had jotted down a few of the points he wanted to bring out. He would walk in jauntily, he told himself, so as not to betray his sixty-five years. He must remember not to look worried. He rubbed his hand over his face, as if he would rub away the wrinkles and the tired, worn look of a cornered man. For he was in a pretty tight corner. The Thompson agency was about to be taken away from him, to be given to younger and more successful men.

Crandall could not remember a time when he had not sold Thompson's goods. He had fought his way up with them in his own town while the original Thompson was fighting his way up in the whole country. He had prospered, too. Indeed, few men were now better known, or more highly respected, in the town.

But there had come the competition of Haskell & Jenks, with their full-page advertisements and special sales. Business methods seemed to have been changing. The people turned gradually from the old shop to the new one. He had fought back for years; but now it was becoming a losing battle. His rival's shop was large and attractive. Old John Crandall had been forced finally to renovate his own, and to put in a new front. That cost a

lot of money, but his credit was good, and he borrowed.

The new shop meant greater expense generally, and it was not so easy to repay his loan as he had expected. Besides, the years were creeping upon him,

and he had no longer the initiative that had once kept him at the front. He got into debt with Thompson. While he was still selling his goods, that did not matter so much; but, if he lost the agency, the debt would have to be settled at once. And he knew, too, that his best customers would go with the agency. He had built up the name locally, and now the name was keeping him going. It was his last card.

And Haskell & Jenks were after it. If Thompson himself were alive, he would not have felt so uneasy. Thompson stuck to his old agents through thick and thin. And Crandall could almost feel his big hand on his shoulder, and his big fighting voice saying: "You're all right, John. Keep right on. I'll back you while either of us has a shilling." But Thompson was dead, and a new man, Crozier, was in control.

Crandall had never seen Crozier; but he had learned that he would be at the headquarters of the company for an hour that morning, arriving at ten-thirty, and now he was on his way on the early train to see him. He finished jotting down his notes and rose a bit wearily to go to the smoking-compartment. He was smoking too much lately, but his nerves seemed to demand it. Only one man was in the compartment when he entered, a well-dressed little man of middle age, who was sitting stiffly by the window.

Crandall sat down heavily.

And then Jenks came in, Jenks of Haskell & Jenks, the junior partner. It seemed to Crandall that Jenks had dogged him for years.



## Thompson's Agent

Why couldn't a man be satisfied with a fair business, and not be always reaching out to snatch customers from others, customers who had been friends for years? Why couldn't he let a man live? What was Jenks doing on that train, any way? Crandall felt his heart stop for a second as he realised it. Jenks, too, was going to see Crozier. It was all up. He held himself taut to answer steadily when Jenks spoke.

"Well," said Jenks, "I suppose it's no use making any bones about it. I guess you're going down to see Crozier."

"Yes," said Crandall.

"So 'm I," said Jenks. "Now that's out. And what's more, I have an appointment with him. He'll get there at ten-thirty, and leave again at twelve, and I'm going to get the agency. Don't believe in holding anything back. Straight from the shoulder; that's me, every time. Everything open and above-board. We want those goods, and we're going to get them. Not going behind your back at all, Crandall. Business is business, I say, and if we can get them, we are entitled to them."

Crandall looked at him dully.

"Forty years," he said, speaking more to himself than to Jenks. "Forty years I've sold Thompson's goods. That agency's mine, Jenks. It's my business. If Thompson was here, he'd say so. You can't have it. You can't get it."

"Bosh!" said Jenks sharply. "I'm going to contract to make twice the sales you've been making. Crozier's no fool. I've never met him, but they say he's a business man all right. You might as well make up your mind that we're going to settle it to-day. Why don't you retire?" with a quick look. "Get out, and take it easy."

"I wish I could," said Crandall quietly; and there was silence.

The little man in the corner by the window spoke for the first time.

"Pardon me, sir," he said, "but how long did you say you've been selling Mr. Thompson's goods?"

"Forty years," said Crandall.

"A long time," said the little man; and there was silence again.

The ticket-collector came to the door. "Change at the junction," he said to all three. "Train arrives there in ten minutes. You'll have half an hour to wait."

But it didn't arrive in ten minutes, or indeed at any time. Two miles from the junction

something went very wrong with the engine. There was a jolt, and a sudden slackening of speed. Then a crash like thunder. Crandall saw the carriage tipping slowly sideways. Then came a roar, a shock, and oblivion.

In a little while John Crandall crawled out of a hole that had been a window, and dropped to the ground. He had been stunned, but was unhurt.

The coach was lying partly on its side, on the edge of an embankment. The front end, badly broken up, was partly down the bank; the rear end was on the track. The engine lay sideways amid a heap of debris, and there was a curl of smoke from the woodwork of the forward end of the coach. The other coaches were still on the track.

The train had been too early a one to carry many passengers, and what there were were now mostly grouped around the driver and fireman, who had jumped when the engine left the rails. The last passengers were just leaving the train. One man had been carried to the side of the track and laid there. Two or three of the railway employees were beating at the fire with their coats, and one had a crowbar, and was tearing at the pile in an effort to get at the flames. There was a hiss of steam from the prostrate locomotive, and above the shouting Crandall heard a man say that no one had been seriously hurt.

One thought then came foremost in his mind. He must get to the junction in half an hour to catch the express. Nothing else mattered. His shoulder began to ache, and he became conscious of a cut on his forehead; but his mind was set only on the junction just visible down the track, and on the train that would take him to Crozier. He must see him to-day. Otherwise the whole matter would be settled before he could ever reach him again. He kept pulling out and looking at his watch again and again, until he realised that it was stopped and the glass broken.

A few passengers were standing by the wrecked coach, gazing dully at the smoke which was now pouring from the windows. Jenks was there, brushing his clothes, and swearing. Crandall heard him ask the distance to the junction, and heard the driver tell him there was just time to do it on foot. He had turned to start when something happened.

At a window of the burning coach a head and shoulders appeared, and the small man who had sat in the smoking-compartment with Crandall pushed himself through, and half jumped, half

## Thompson's Agent

fell, to the ground. His clothes were torn, and one hand was bleeding.

"I want a crowbar!" he shouted. "Quick! My wife's in there, and she's caught under a beam. I want a crowbar! I can't move!" and his voice broke.

The weakness fell away from John Crandall. It was the old John Crandall of thirty years ago who ran to the man who was beating at the fire, and snatched the crowbar from his hands. It was the old John Crandall who came back to the flustered group that was trying to hold back the little man.

"You can't go into that car," some one was saying excitedly. "It is certain death. The fire's sweeping through like a chimney."

There was no question in Crandall's mind. He broke through the group, thrusting the restraining arms away fiercely.

"Let him go, I tell you," he shouted. "His wife's in there!" And they fell back, and let the two climb in at the upper end.

It was necessary to grope their way through the smoke, down to the middle of the carriage, where the woman was lying, pinned down by a heavy beam. They went with their bodies bent forward, their arms over their faces.

"This way," said the little man, talking in

gasps. "I left her just a few minutes to go to the smoker. Her foot's caught. We've got to get that beam off——" His voice broke again, and Crandall spoke sharply.

"Steady," he said. "Keep your head, and do what I tell you. We'll get her out. Here she is," he added as his foot struck the beam, and he saw through the smoke the form of a woman huddled on the floor. The beam had fallen across the gangway, one end resting against the side and the other on the floor. Her ankle was held tightly in the triangle formed by the beam, the floor, and the lower bar of the seat. She was crying softly and held out her hands to Crandall's companion.

"Oh, Joe, the fire!" she sobbed.

"It's all right now, Mary," said he. "We'll have you out in half a minute." His voice shook; but he put his arm round her shoulder steadily, and whispered something close to her ear.

Crandall looked at the lower end of the coach. The flames were licking upwards, and



One had a crowbar and was tearing at the pile



## Thompson's Agent

would sweep through in a moment. He looked at the beam. Ten men could not move it.

"Smash back this seat!" he shouted, and slipped the iron wedge beneath the seat-bar. Both men heaved together. The seat creaked, and ripped backwards, and the foot was free.

Together they pushed and groped their way through the black smoke to the window. The little group outside was waiting to relieve them, and a dozen hands steadied the woman as they slipped to the ground and laid their burden by the track. The trainmen and passengers crowded around. And a doctor with a black bag and an air of authority was there, quietly giving orders.

Crandall slipped away after a minute, and sat down wearily, the crowbar across his knees. He was very tired now, and his hands were shaking. Presently the little man came over and stood beside him.

"The doctor says she'll be all right," he said

in an unsteady voice. "I—I can't thank you——"

"You don't need to; it's nothing," said Crandall wearily. He tried to make some commonplace remark to shut off the other's thanks, and, looking down, saw the old familiar Thompson trade-mark on the bar.

"I ought to be able to use this bar," he said.

"It's one of Thompson's; I sell them."

"So do I," said the other.

His words aroused Crandall to the work of the day. He looked down the track, and saw Jenks walking quickly, half-way to the junction. He rose to his feet a little unsteadily.

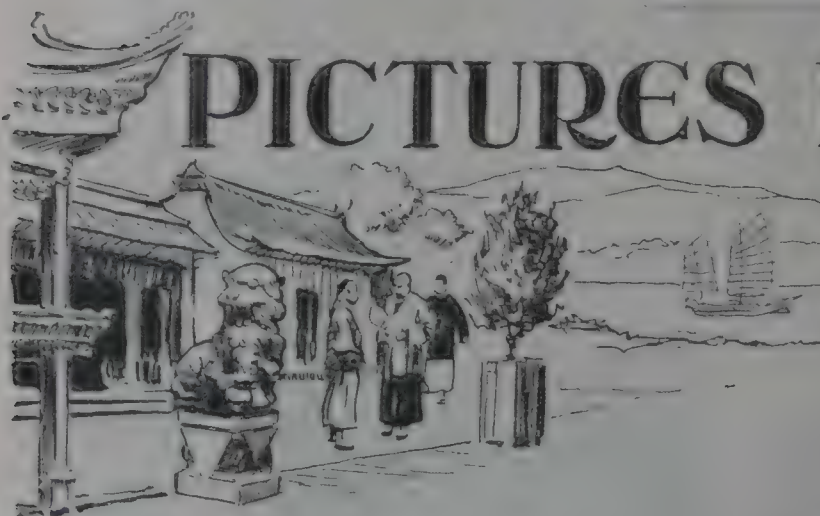
"I must be going," he said. "I've got to get to the junction in time for the express. My business—my business is in kind of a bad way. I've got to see Mr. Crozier before twelve."

The little man put his hand on his shoulder.

"I wouldn't worry too much about that agency if I were you, Mr. Crandall," he said.

"I'm Crozier."

C. E. WORLD



# PICTURES FROM AFAR

By L. B. Paull

## Foot-binding in China—*continued*

A missionary and his wife, returning to their home after furlough in England were surprised to find their old amah waiting for them. She had been happily settled in another situation when they left, but her faithful heart still yearned over the children she had nursed; she wanted to be taken back. This placed them in a dilemma. It will sometimes happen that in the rush of daily work, serious problems get pushed a little into the background, but on furlough they assume their right proportions. To these two, often wandering through the restful spaces of English greenery, the monstrous

brutality of foot-binding had presented itself afresh, and they were determined to make a renewed stand against it.

"Amah," said the wife sadly, for she felt her task a very heavy one, "we cannot take you back unless you consent to have your feet unbound; it is said of us missionaries that we do not really disapprove of the custom because we employ those who have bound feet."

The old woman was dismayed, for she was a very heavy person, not unlike a feather bed tied in the middle; and when in her winter clothing, made of cotton wool, had often amused the children by sweeping tablecloths off tables, and overturning chairs as she moved about the room.

Those who do not understand the process of foot-binding are in the habit of thinking that the

## Foot-binding in China

foot becomes like a lump of flesh in course of time, but that is not so ; it always remains a *folded* foot, and therefore can be unbound, though the pain it causes can easily be under-



A Chinese bound foot

stood by those who have any imagination. The poor old soul, faithful to the family she had always loved, went back to her home for three weeks to face sleepless nights and days of pain.

"But won't we give her a good time when she comes back!" said the missionary's wife.

A poor woman was brought to my daughter in great suffering. She was alone in the world and got her living by carrying heavy loads all day long. Her legs were swollen and suppurating from a bite of some insect, and what made the cure almost impossible were her bound and half dead feet. She kept kneeling down before my daughter begging her to "mend her legs." She was taken to hospital where some improvement was gained through a long and happy rest.

Foot-binding is a cruel custom even for the grand lady who lies on her cushioned couch, or

is carried about in her palanquin, but what about the working woman who stands all day in fields in the burning heat, or carries heavy loads, or tends unguarded machinery in mills on a twelve-hour shift?

Before girls can enter the Mission day-school they must unbind their feet. This is a hard rule, and hard to carry out, but unless right thoughts are put into the rising generation what hope is there for the future? My daughter writes:—



"There is one splendid sturdy little damsel over whom we waged war for nearly a year before the parents caved in and took off the bandages, and after she had been in the school a year, her little cousin was drawn in too. The masters in the college have been easier to persuade, and we have two darling things from

one master's home. These are small results; but we must be thankful for the glimmer, praying that it may develop into greater light."

## DELIVERANCE

TAKE from me, Lord, all love of self—  
That canker of the soul;  
Keep me from craving this world's pelf,  
Or making fame my goal;  
Let me remember I am Thine,  
And fitly live for things divine!

Cleanse Thou my heart from taint of sin,  
That separates from Thee;  
Let Thy pure Spirit dwell within,  
To guide and strengthen me,  
To rule my will, to seal me one  
With Christ, my never-setting Sun.

Break Thou the bonds of craven fear  
That hold me silent when  
The weary-hearted long to hear  
Thy messages to men:  
O God of Love, breathe e'en through me,  
Some word to draw them nearer Thee!

Release me from the shrinking dread  
Of what the years may bring:  
When Faith burns low, when Hope seems dead,  
Oh, let me closer cling  
To Thee Who knowest all the way,  
And hitherto hast been my Stay.

Prevent me ever looking back  
At failures that are past,  
But let me on the Homeward track  
This confidence hold fast—  
The wasted years Thou wilt restore  
In Thy long Day of Evermore.

Lift all the shadows from my heart  
That mar its central Peace,  
And, as I joy in all Thou art,  
As Faith and Love increase.  
So shall my will with Thine be blent,  
And life be lived in glad content!

GRACE H. HILL





# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village  
by Amos E. Denner

## Granny Whitlock's Theology

PROBABLY every village has its local "oracle," and Moortor was no exception, for in Ned Payne, the village shoemaker and exponent of so-called communist views of a fantastic nature, the little place was amply provided.

The man himself was a shallow individual, and consequently the plain but simple people of the neighbourhood refused to take him seriously.

It should be mentioned here that Ned Payne was not native born. He was a Londoner, and had lived there for the first forty years of his life, before descending upon the little moor-fringed hamlet with his numerous and untidy family.

One of the first places that the self-styled "champion" of the people's rights had visited upon his arrival in Moortor was the "Heather Bell" public-house. An hour later, he was more than "lively" as the result of his imbibing the beer that could be obtained there.

Under the influence of liquor he became distinctly aggressive and, outside in the hostel courtyard, he lost no time in airing his pet views, even to the point of boredom, to all and sundry who gathered round.

"I'm one of those who believe in getting 'back to the land,'" he swaggered. "The land was meant for the people. City people don't see that their faces are being ground by

the capitalist class, but I've rumbled it. The land for me every time. That's why I've come here. I'll teach you people how to take the bull by the horns, and——"

"Excuse me, Mister," broke in some one; "but you'll be the very man I want. I've got a young bull that's a bit frisky like, and the creature has broken its nose-ring. I must get a new one put in somehow. . . . Wants some one to take hold of its horns whilst I do the job. Come right on with me, there's a good chap. 'Twas a long time ago we had anything to wake us up in Moortor."

And the roar of laughter that went up from the villagers completely drowned Ned Payne's somewhat embarrassed answer.

As will be readily imagined, it was not long before old Granny Whitlock came into contact with this not altogether welcome addition to the peace-loving little community.

Maybe the plain record of some of her dealings with Ned Payne will not be without interest in these chronicles of happenings in a quiet village.

The arrival of a twelfth baby at the Paynes' home provided a reason for a visit from the old lady, a few days after the event.

The house which the Paynes rented had, at one time, been a pretty enough place, but a slovenly house-wife soon gave the cottage the aspect of a slum. The children were neglected and ill-clad, and seemed to take a malicious pleasure in making themselves a nuisance in general. Gardens were broken into; flowers and vegetables were either stolen or trampled under their mischievous feet, and as for ever thinking of closing pasture gates—well, that was quite out of the question. . . . Gates were meant to be swung upon, until completely broken from their hinges!

## Moortor Folk

Granny Whitlock had packed a generous basket with good things, and when she arrived at the house it was to find the husband bending over a smoky fire, cooking a "meal," as he termed it, for the wife upstairs. The said "meal" proved to be a sizzling kipper! which, when done to his liking, the man slipped from the end of a skewer on to a grubby-looking plate!

"Mercy me!" exclaimed the old lady aghast, when she had taken in the situation. "You don't mean to say you are giving the poor woman such stuff as *that*! Where's your common sense, man? And you the father of such a family! . . . I should have thought that by this time—— Here! Get out of the way! Save that kipper thing for your own supper. Get on with your cobbling. . . . I'll attend to the missus."

Quickly, Granny Whitlock unpacked a clean white cloth from her basket, together with

some bovril. A small loaf of home-made bread and a roll of sweet dairy-made butter were also produced, together with some dainty sponge-cakes. Soon something dainty and tempting stood on an old tray which had been covered with the snowy cloth beforehand, and when the invalid caught a first sight of it all, the effect was altogether to the good.

"What I say is—this is the proper communie's system," prattled Ned Payne, when Granny Whitlock had returned to the kitchen, after busying herself in making things comfortable upstairs.

"Seems to me that you've got hold of the idea all plumb like," he went on, as he saw the old lady carefully packing the rest of the contents of her basket on a shelf. "Share. and share alike . . . that's the plan. Then it will make sure of the three 'B's' for every man. . . . 'Beer, 'Baccy, and Bacon.' 'Tis much better than——"



"You don't mean to say you are giving the poor woman such stuff as *that*!"



"Kippers and nonsense! that's what you're rattling off!" ejaculated the old lady impatiently, at the same time glancing at the wretched appointments of the cobbler's home. "More like the three 'D's,'" she continued sarcastically, "Drink, Dirt, and the Devil!"

Ned Payne gave a leering laugh.

"Oh, so you're one of the religious sort, then," he said, with a touch of sneering badly concealed. "You ought to be in Hyde Park for a few minutes. That's where I learnt a thing or two. 'Tis a proper place to cure all those delusions about the devil and such like. You can't——"

"Look here! Ned Payne," interrupted Granny Whitlock firmly, "'tis no good you standing there blethering away like that. I settled the matter of my religion when you were just about chipping your shell. . . . I'm not much for arguing, but I hold two things to be true: First, that the devil can't make bad people good, and second, that God can't make good people bad. . . . Put that in your precious thinking box for a start. . . . I've heard that you say there is no God. . . . That's just the language of a fool. . . . The old Book will back me up in this. Just go upstairs and take a look at that sweet morsel of humanity lying in its mother's arms. . . . No God indeed! You must be a noodle even to hint at it.

"And as for saying that the devil is a delusion—well—just make up your mind to stay away from the 'Heather Bell,' and set about cleaning up your home a bit. . . . Take those bairns of yours in hand too; bless their poor little hearts. . . . I gave six of them a bite of food this morning. They were down the road crying pitifully because you had sent them off to school without any breakfast. . . . Said that you had told them to go to a place which any decent father would be ashamed to utter with his lips. . . . Try putting these things right, I say, and if you find it easy, then say so, and maybe I'll listen when you prate of the devil being a delusion."

All the time Granny Whitlock was speaking, the man repeatedly tried to interject some words of his own, but in vain did he splutter and protest. The old lady had got fairly started, and she was determined to have her say.

"I haven't finished with you yet," she exclaimed warmly. "And the Almighty hasn't finished with you either. . . . But don't you

ever try to catch me with any of your silly chaff, Ned Payne, or else you'll hear something you don't like. I'm just going to pray hard that God will open your eyes. What you need most of all is the Saviour from sin. 'Tis a wonder what He could see in any of us to die on the cross for. . . . And if I didn't know that He could make a new creature of you, I wouldn't stay here wasting my breath. . . . Mark

my words, my man, unless you let Jesus Christ take you in hand, as sure as that kipper once swam in the sea, you'll find the way of the transgressor growing harder and harder. . . . Now I must be off. Maybe I'll look in again to-morrow with some garments for the dear little babe."

And leaving the somewhat bewildered cobbler scratching his tousled head, the old lady toddled away.

*(To be continued.)*

## Odds and Ends

Make the best of a bad bargain.

"I'll not willingly offend,  
Nor be easily offended.  
What's amiss, I'll strive to mend,  
And endure what can't be mended."

Mendings are honourable, rags are abominable.

Make God your end, and your joy shall have no end.

What is God's will, can ne'er be ill.  
In darkest night, He makes it light.  
For those who trust, help them He must.

## SLEEPERS, AWAKE!


*"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—ST. JOHN x. 10.*

O souls that now slumber, half famished, half dead,  
And yet might with heavenly manna be fed.  
Hark! Jesus is calling! Awake, souls, awake!  
And seek first the riches earth's gold cannot make.  
Man made in God's image immortal must be,  
And when eyes are opened new wonders we see.

Christ offers us cleansing from sin, and new light,  
To guide us in pathways that lead to the right.  
Oh, how can we turn from our Saviour and Friend—  
His love that is yearning to save to the end?  
O Saviour, dear Saviour, we come unto Thee  
That life at its highest abundant may be.

O'er evil victorious, souls strengthened by Thee,  
In brotherly kindness new beauty we see.  
E'en trials and sorrows lose most of their sting,  
O'ershadowed, and comforted, sealed 'neath Thy wing.  
And so life victorious, abundantly blessed,  
On earth gains a foretaste of joy, peace, and rest.

E. DEAN



# At Last!

By Eleanor Clare

MRS. TURNBULL was a washerwoman. She washed the first four days in the week; and on this particular Thursday a keen March wind and clear sun had dried the clothes so quickly that the widow was already sitting in the old leather armchair, though it was not yet four o'clock.

She had drawn the table nearer the fire, for she always felt cold after washing day. Widow Turnbull was getting on in years. But she was not thinking of the washing, though her eyes were fixed on the neat pile of clothes on the dresser opposite. They were now dampened ready for ironing after tea.

A fresh pad of notepaper lay before her, by the side of which were two sheets torn into bits and scattered about on the well-scoured table. Three times she had dipped her pen into the ink-bottle that was tilted on its side, and three times the ink had dried on the nib.

Her scanty grey hair was coiled tightly at the back of her head; the parting in the middle had become very wide. Deep sorrow lurked in the mild blue eyes, their mildness forming a strange contrast to the determined mouth. The mouth was slightly more determined at the moment, for to write a letter to the minister was a harder task for Mrs. Turnbull than a big day's wash. To-day, in fact, she had washed Dick's greasy overalls as well, that he wore at the motor factory, and thought nothing of the extra trouble.

Mrs. Turnbull had married late in life, and Dick, who was not yet seventeen, was the darling son of her old age.

Her thoughts shifted like a clock pendulum back to her letter. Hadn't the minister himself repeated last night what he had said the previous Wednesday: that any one in trouble could send special petitions to him during Lent, and at the Wednesday evening services these letters would be read and the persons mentioned would be specially prayed for? "Persistence tests the quality of prayer," he had said. "It is hardly prayer which does not go on, even when there is no answer."

Had she not prayed unceasingly when her husband was dying of pneumonia six years ago? But there had been no answer. And, after all, it had been for the best, for hadn't the doctor said afterwards that he could never have worked again? And he was not the sort of man to sit about the house and let a woman work for him. She could not remember when she had not prayed for Dick; and still there was no answer.

She sighed as she thought of his last wicked deed. He had tried to wreck a train. He had, with the help of a companion, placed two iron bars and a quantity of iron pipe and wood at a tunnel. It had been struck by the engine of a train that was going fifty miles an hour. Fortunately the train kept the metals, so the policeman said when he called to complain that morning. How horrified she had been to see the policeman at the door! How her knees had trembled when he warned her that the next time there was any complaint to make of Master Dick, he would probably be sent to prison! Only his youth had saved him this time.

Once again she dipped the pen into the ink, and with trembling hand began: "Dear sir, will you please pray for my poor wayward boy that he may be a better son, and be led to do what is right?"

Folding the note in half, she rose and pushed the table back into its place. She need not light the lamp until she had delivered the note, she reflected, as she put on her coat and bonnet.



## At Last !

It took her some time even to reach the top of the long street, for she had the wind against her. At last she came to the little square ; but she saw only the tower of the church facing her in the gathering dusk. To the left of the church was the minister's house. After a nervous glance around, she hurried up the garden path and thrust the folded sheet of paper into the letter-box.

Then she hurried back, with wildly beating heart, counting the days that must pass before her petition would be read : Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday ! As she turned that part of the square that faced her own street, she saw Dick leaving the house. That habitual sway of the arm from the shoulder she recognised instantly. He was walking townwards.

Ten minutes later, while she was preparing her tea, she discovered that he had helped himself to the meat that was intended for the next day's dinner. "Dearie me ! why couldn't he have waited till I came back ?" she muttered, disappointed to have missed him.

While she ironed, her mind went back to Dick and of how she had prayed unceasingly that he might become a good and dutiful son. As a baby he was naughty, and during school days his teacher was always complaining about him. But she was unshaken in her belief that her prayers would be answered. She was always gentle and tender ; a marvel to her neighbours, who shook their heads and said, "He's past praying for, Mrs. Turnbull !"

How eagerly she looked forward to the following Wednesday, when the whole congregation would be praying for her boy ! Not knowing, of course, that they were praying for him. "That would be a secret between the minister and herself," she murmured, placing the freshly ironed linen on the clothes horse round the fire.

That night it was bitterly cold, so she went into Dick's room and put an extra blanket on his bed. She gazed for a while at his flushed cheeks, and yearned to smooth the black curls from his brow. But she was afraid she might waken him. He had gone to bed unwashed, and his dirty hand clutched a corner of the clean pillow case. A sigh escaped her as she thought of the time when he was a tiny mite whom she could wash and dress. She knelt by the side of the bed until he stirred uneasily ; then she quietly left him.

At last Wednesday evening came. She sat in her usual place at the back of the church, and gazed pensively at the carving on the arches

and at the coloured windows until the organ struck up and the choir streamed in.

How she loved the dear Lenten hymns with their note of sadness ! She wished now that she had sat a little nearer the middle of the church. And oh, how thankful she felt that she had not told any one about the letter !

When she rose from her knees after the hymn the minister was in the pulpit. She strained forward with wildly beating heart to hear him read out the petitions. They were to be read from the pulpit ; then each petition was to be followed by a prayer. One by one they were read ; but there was no mention of anything like the letter she had written.

With a curious sinking of the heart she rose, for the minister gave out the last hymn. But the widow, oblivious of all present, knelt down again. Presently the choir streamed out. Still she knelt. Other old ladies and younger, busier women stole a glance at her as they passed quietly out. When she rose, the church was empty except for the verger who was waiting to shut the door. Still, she consoled herself with the thought that perhaps he had received so many that he had kept hers aside until the next week. But it was a long time to wait.

She had scarcely seen Dick the whole week, for he had got into the habit of coming in to snatch a bit of food when he knew she would be taking back the washing. At night she went to bed tired out, leaving his supper ready, for she knew she could not get through her daily work without sufficient sleep.

Wednesday came round again at last. It had rained off and on all day, so that she had not been able to get the clothes dried. She was a little late for church. Of course the petition would be read without her, she knew. But she did want to hear it for herself.

The service went on as usual. Petitions were read—but not hers. It seemed incredible ! So incredible that she rose from her knees with the other worshippers in order to see the minister at the church door. Sometimes he was there after the service bidding good night to the people. But he was not there to-night.

An unexpected shower hurried the congregation to their various homes. She stood alone at the church door, so bewildered that she scarcely knew for a moment whether to go to the right or the left. Then with a heavy sigh she made her way along the cobbled square and down her own street.

The following Sunday proved that March was living up to her reputation of coming in

## At Last!



The latch was lifted and he stood before her

like a lion and going out like a lamb, for the sun streamed into the kitchen and made the crocuses budding in the green box on the window-sill look like little bursts of flame.

Dick was out as usual. Sunday was the only day when she could cook a proper dinner for him; a substantial roast joint which would last some days. But even as she peeled the potatoes her thoughts were that her prayers might be answered.

A few minutes after twelve she heard Dick's footstep; the latch was lifted and he stood before her. Just as the gravy was sizzling round the beef! That was the point she always remembered most vividly afterwards; for it dated the time when he became the joy of her heart. Something wonderful in his face made her drop the dish on the oven top and clasp him to her. Her prayer was answered. Dick, a new, loving Dick, drew her gently to the old leather chair; and when she was seated, he began—

"Mother; I've—I've a lot to say." He drew up the low stool and sat at her feet. "I—I went to church this morning—but wait until you know

all," he added, ashamed of himself as he noticed the glad light leap into her eyes.

"I went to upset the service. I and Jack Pringle were going to have some fun. We were going to shout Hip, hip, hooray! as soon as the minister was in the pulpit. Pringle wouldn't go in. But I did."

His eyes were fixed on the flickering flame, and his mother bent forward and put her withered hand over his. Her action almost moved him to tears. But he went on, falteringly—

"I expected the minister to open the Bible, but he didn't. He opened a sheet of notepaper. Everybody was so surprised. He said it was a letter he'd had for some time and hadn't been able to read, because the person who wrote it had been trembling at the time. He said the writing showed what the woman was suffering. Yes; it was a woman's writing!" noticing how his

mother had half-started from the chair. "A woman's prayer for her poor wayward boy that he might lead a better life.

"It made me feel queer when the whole congregation knelt down to pray for that boy; an' before I knew what I was about I was kneelin' too. I'd entered the church to laugh; but I couldn't laugh. I stayed for the sermon. Now, I want to make a fresh start. I kept out o' the way, knowing I was making you sad and feeling I couldn't change. But that letter just put the lid on. I'd like to go with you to-night."

She smiled. A rare, sweet smile that is seen on the faces of those who suffer uncomplainingly. She kissed him, a kiss which he returned with interest. She was glad she had not been there—her emotion would have betrayed her. "The Lord knoweth best," she murmured to herself.

"Is dinner ready, mother?" asked Dick, breaking in upon her thoughts.

Her happy eyes beamed at him as she rose; and, as she proudly remarked to her neighbours afterwards, it just did her good to see him drying the dishes for her.



# Talking with God

A YOUNG artist, studying in Rome, was beginning to yield to dissolute habits. His mother, hearing rumours of this, became very anxious, and spent much time in praying for him. Afterwards, when visiting Rome with her daughter, the young man noticed the beautiful expression on her face, and said :

"What has mother been doing lately?"

"Why do you ask?" was the reply.

"Oh," he said, "her face is so beautiful!"

"Perhaps," said the sister, "it is because she has been praying so much for you lately."

A man cannot live much with God and not show the effect of it. To have looked into the face of the Great King, and to have enjoyed the privilege of spending some ten or twenty minutes at His feet, must weave into the whole fabric of life some golden threads that shall glisten even amid the dulling and tarnishing influence of the world.

Some time ago a great preacher said that one Friday he heard a tap at his door by a baby hand, and presently a little face peeped in. The father said : "What do you come for, my child? do you want anything?" and the little fellow cuddled up to him and said, "No, father, I only wanted to be with you."

And what is true of the little nestlings and nurslings of our home, in their yearning for love and fellowship, for

the interchange of thought and embrace, is also characteristic of every true heart. We should pray that we may have an opportunity of exchanging thoughts with God.

It is a mistake always to look on prayer as a means of obtaining things from God. A husband would grieve if his wife never sought his society except to obtain things from him; and

surely God is grieved by His children rushing into His presence, to hurry out a stream of requests for themselves and those dear to them, and then hastening back to their busy life without attempting to interchange tender thoughts and loving looks.

The Jewish Holy of Holies was just a closed place. It had neither window nor door, and a curtain veiled the entrance, but in that closed and inner place the soul of the priest not only pleaded for Israel, but received the impressions of the Divine will by the changing light and shade that passed over the Shekinah stone. Thus, when Jesus Christ would speak to us of prayer, He said : "Enter into the inner chamber"; let every soul have its Holy of Holies, in which it shall stand before God, not only speaking to God, but waiting until God shall speak to it.

But how blessed it is that we can find that place anywhere, for the heart may itself be a closed place! We must needs live amid the rush of the world, which

## MY LITTLE GREY HOME

O little grey house, in a distant town,  
Your lights are lit and the blinds are down!  
They are sitting there, in the firelight glow,  
The dear old friends of the long ago;  
But road and river and ocean blue  
Lie 'tween my yearning heart and you.

O little grey house, did your echoes sweet  
Ever wake to the tread of my childish feet?  
Or is it a dream that I climbed your stairs,  
And knelt by my mother for whispered prayers?  
At even time, when the light was low,  
O little grey home, I loved you so!

No matter where, or how long we roam,  
There's only one spot that the heart calls "home."  
Tho' the new land be kind, and new friends true,  
The warmest throb of my heart is for you!  
So I dream, while the quiet stars shine down,  
Of my little grey home, in an English town.

LIZZIE KINGS

## Talking with God

will force its way in upon us, yet the heart may become a secret place, and there, closed in from all outside things, we may not only ask from God, but listen for God to speak to us—things which otherwise we would miss.

It is probable that every one of us is the centre of voices from the unseen and eternal world, to which we are not sensitive; but which, if they had visited any of the saints of Holy Scripture, would have been as wonderful as those of which we read. The difference between them and us is not in the favouritism which revealed to

them secrets which are hidden from us, but that they knew when God spoke and understood the speech of heaven.

How often the telephone bell rings in the office when the clerk is gone! How often the movement of the telegraph needle has pointed out messages of life and death—messages, perhaps, which concerned us closely! but we have stood unmoved because unknowing, and unknowing because unable to read the message. It would well repay us to learn, by quiet waiting before God, the code of His signals, the syllables of His speech.

F. B. MEYER



*[From the painting by A. Ciseri in the National Gallery, Rome]*

**"BEHOLD THE MAN!"**

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, 'Behold the Man!'"



# It is Coming

**C**CHEER up! There is an end, God's end, for your life, and the end will justify the steps which perplex us so now. All is well that ends well. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Salvation is, you see, not a recompense merely for suffering, but is the explanation of suffering. The crown of life is not merely a reward for being faithful, but a result of faithfulness. It is not something given for being good, as we give sweets to a child. Not merely that. Every end is a new beginning. The world begins a new morning after every night, and life rises out of death. To endure to the end is to be saved; to be saved is to begin here and now a new life.

Salvation is not merely a "far-off divine event" which is going to come in at death and be the crowning glory of a life of faith and endurance. It is that, yes; but it is also a present possession. To endure to the end is a continual evidence of being saved.

And so let us learn to leave the future with God. God's end—and we know that God has an end for His world and for His children—will come in His own time. He will tell us what He means by it. He will justify His ways among men. He will explain His purpose—He is explaining it.

The end is not far off; the end is being reached here and now, and the purpose is being fulfilled here and now in your very endurance. The very strain is giving you the strength. It is saving you if you are putting up any fight at all; it is saving you from your sins. He will claim you as His redeemed.

The Kingdom of God that to you delays its coming is on the way. Not only the Kingdom *shall* come; it is coming now.

There is a cactus flower, so they say, which, after a whole hundred years of waiting, bursts at last into bloom. It might be thought that the blooming is a mere legend that has been handed down from the Middle Ages, when people were

not scientific and did not observe things. The years pass, and more years; season succeeds season and generation even follows generation, and nothing happens.

Nothing, you say? Nothing happens? Nothing will happen, nothing can happen—till something does happen—the cactus blooms! And you who say the Kingdom of God cometh not, remember, the Master looked up and He said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."

Yes, the Kingdom of God comes, and he that endures to the end shall be saved.

## TWO WAYS

There's always a way to rise to the top,  
Always a way to advance,  
And the road that leads to mount Success  
Does not go by the way of chance.  
It goes through the stations of work and strive,  
Through the valley of persevere,  
And the man who determines to rise to the top  
Must be willing to pay most dear.

There's always a way to tumble down,  
Always a way to slide,  
And the man whom you find at the foot of the hill  
Sought for an easy ride.  
So, on and up though the way be rough  
And storms come thick and fast:  
There's plenty of room for the man who tries,  
And victory comes at last.



# LIGHT IN THE HOME

No. 40. NEW SERIES

APRIL, 1925



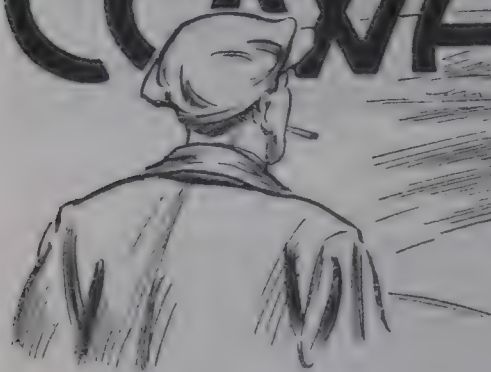
**A Stormy Day**

*[From the painting by L. Cheviot]*

*Registered at the General Post Office, London, for transmission by Canadian and Newfoundland Magazine Post.*



# THE COWARD



"**H**ERE comes a chap I don't know," remarked John Bailey, one spring evening, as he stood outside the post-office at Kingwell, a south coast fishing village, talking to his friend, Dick Brown; "who is he, I wonder?"

"He works at Doidge's farm," Dick Brown answered; "Sam Petherick he's called. I happen to know, because I saw him driving farmer Doidge's milk cart yesterday, and made inquiries about him."

The two young men were fishermen, employed on a trawler. They led arduous lives whilst at sea, but spent their time ashore in idleness, lounging about the quay or the village, or sitting in the bar of the public-house, smoking and drinking. Both having been born and bred at Kingwell, they took great interest in the affairs of every one in the neighbourhood, so when Sam Petherick, having passed by them, entered the post-office they continued to talk of him.

"An ugly-looking, under-sized chap," said Dick Brown disparagingly. "I'm not taken with his looks. Farmer Doidge got him through an advertisement, I understand—took him because he had first-class references."

"I suppose he's taken Steve Hill's post, eh?"

"Yes. And as Steve Hill's still out of a job he hasn't a good word to say for him."

"That's not fair. If Steve hadn't the sense to keep a comfortable, well-paid job he needn't be a dog in the manger. He'd be working for farmer Doidge now if he'd minded his work and kept sober."

When Sam Petherick came out of the post-office the two young fishermen nodded to him and said, "Good evening." He was certainly very plain, with a freckled face, sandy hair, and

greenish eyes; but his smile was pleasant as he answered—

"Good evening! Splendid weather, isn't it? I'm just off for a bathe."

"Better come with us first and have a drink," John Bailey suggested, good-humouredly.

But Sam Petherick shook his head. "No, thank you," he replied; "I'm a teetotaler"—and went on in the direction of the beach.

"I don't think he's our sort," commented Dick Brown, adding: "I don't think much of him."

Bailey shrugged his shoulders, but made no reply.

Just then a tall, bearded man of about thirty, no other than Stephen Hill, came out of the post-office and struck in. "Nor I! I call him a poor, puny chap—a regular weakling. But he thinks enough of himself!"

"How do you know?" asked Bailey. "If it's only that you're down on him because he's got your place——"

"It's not!" Stephen Hill interrupted quickly. Farmer Doidge had got rid of him for drunkenness, so he could not say he had been treated unfairly. "I judge from what he says himself," he continued. "I had a talk with him last evening, and found out what he's like. He neither drinks nor smokes, and sets up for being religious—goes to church regularly, and would like to take a class in the Sunday school."

"Does he know he's got your old job?" asked Dick Brown enviously.

"Yes. He said he hoped I'd soon get something else, and he'd keep his eyes open for me. I nearly told him to mind his own business. As though I couldn't look out for myself!"

It struck Bailey that this sounded rather



## The Coward

ungrateful. Evidently Stephen Hill was prejudiced against Petherick.

"Well, I hope you will get work before long," he said gravely, "for the sake of your wife and kiddies."

Stephen Hill had a delicate wife, and several young children. His face flushed when he was reminded of them, for though, of course, he was receiving unemployment pay, he was spending so much money at the public-house that it was a very lean time in his home.

Spring passed into summer, and by harvest time Sam Petherick was well known at Kingwell, but little liked. There was a feeling against him, though it was said that farmer Doidge had formed a high opinion of him.

"He's a time-server, that's what he is," Hill declared to a group of fishermen on the quay one evening, "and he's got the blind side of Mr. Doidge—very cleverly, I admit. But there's no grit in him, not an atom. In my opinion he's a coward. A chap jostled against him on purpose in the street the other day, and swore at him, and he walked straight on. Didn't want to have a row with a man who'd evidently been drinking, he said. If I'd been in his place I'd have——"

He broke off meaningly, his fists raised in a fighting attitude.

"He's a bit nervy, I think," remarked Dick Brown. "I watched him bathing the other evening, and laughed to see how timid he seemed."

"He can't swim," Bailey reminded him; "he told me he never had a glimpse of the sea till he came to Kingwell. When he's learnt to swim——"

"Ah, when!" broke in Hill contemptuously. "He takes good care not to get out of his depth. He'll never be drowned."

"He's right to be careful," said Bailey. "I don't see why he should be laughed at for that."

But his companions thought otherwise, and a feeling of contempt for Petherick, fostered by Hill, took root in their minds, and, later, showed itself in the way they treated him.

In the autumn Hill obtained a post in the district with a miller, to drive a waggon with a pair of horses. The horses were beautiful young spirited creatures, and Hill was very proud of them. One afternoon, after a journey to a neighbouring town with a heavy load, he was returning with his waggon empty when he came upon his eldest little girl, Molly, and took her up with him. Their way led through the village, and, on reaching the public-house, Hill stopped.

"I shan't be a minute," he told Molly, as he descended from the waggon. "Well, what do you want?"

The question was put to Sam Petherick, who had stepped across the road from his milk cart which stood before a cottage where he had milk to deliver and said something to him under his breath.

"I asked if it was safe for you to leave your little girl with those two young horses," was his anxious reply.

"Safe!" cried Stephen scornfully. "*She's* not afraid!"

"No," Sam agreed; "she's too young to realise there might be danger if——"

"There's no danger, I tell you!" Stephen interrupted. He had already been drinking, and his temper was irritable. "I shan't be gone a minute, and, anyway, it's not your business to interfere. Molly's all right! *She's* no coward!"

Sam flashed a reproachful glance at him, but said no more. He returned to his milk cart with a heart hot with indignation, for well he knew that Hill had meant to insinuate that it was he who was the coward.

"He hates me," he thought; "I believe it's he who sets folks against me. It's too bad! It's—hulloa, what's coming?"

Hoot—hoot—hoot! A large char-à-banc was coming down the street. Molly uttered a cry for her father, whilst the leading horse in the waggon gave a sudden forward bound. The horse between the shafts was obliged to follow, and the next minute waggon and horses started down the street in the direction of the sea, just as Stephen Hill rushed out of the public-house.

"Whoa! Whoa!" he shouted frantically; then: "Oh, my little maid! Oh, God Almighty, save her!"

Stephen Hill's prayer of agony was heard, and, by God's mercy, his little daughter's life was saved. How that came about John Bailey told a group of eager listeners on the quay that evening.

"I'd just come ashore, and was going home," he said, "when I heard a tremendous clatter and saw a waggon and horses coming, heading straight for the quay. Then I saw a child clinging to the side of the waggon, and a man lying almost flat on the shaft horse trying to reach the reins, to pull the leader up. And he did it! That man was Sam Petherick. Yes,"—as there was a murmur of applause—"it was the most



## The Coward

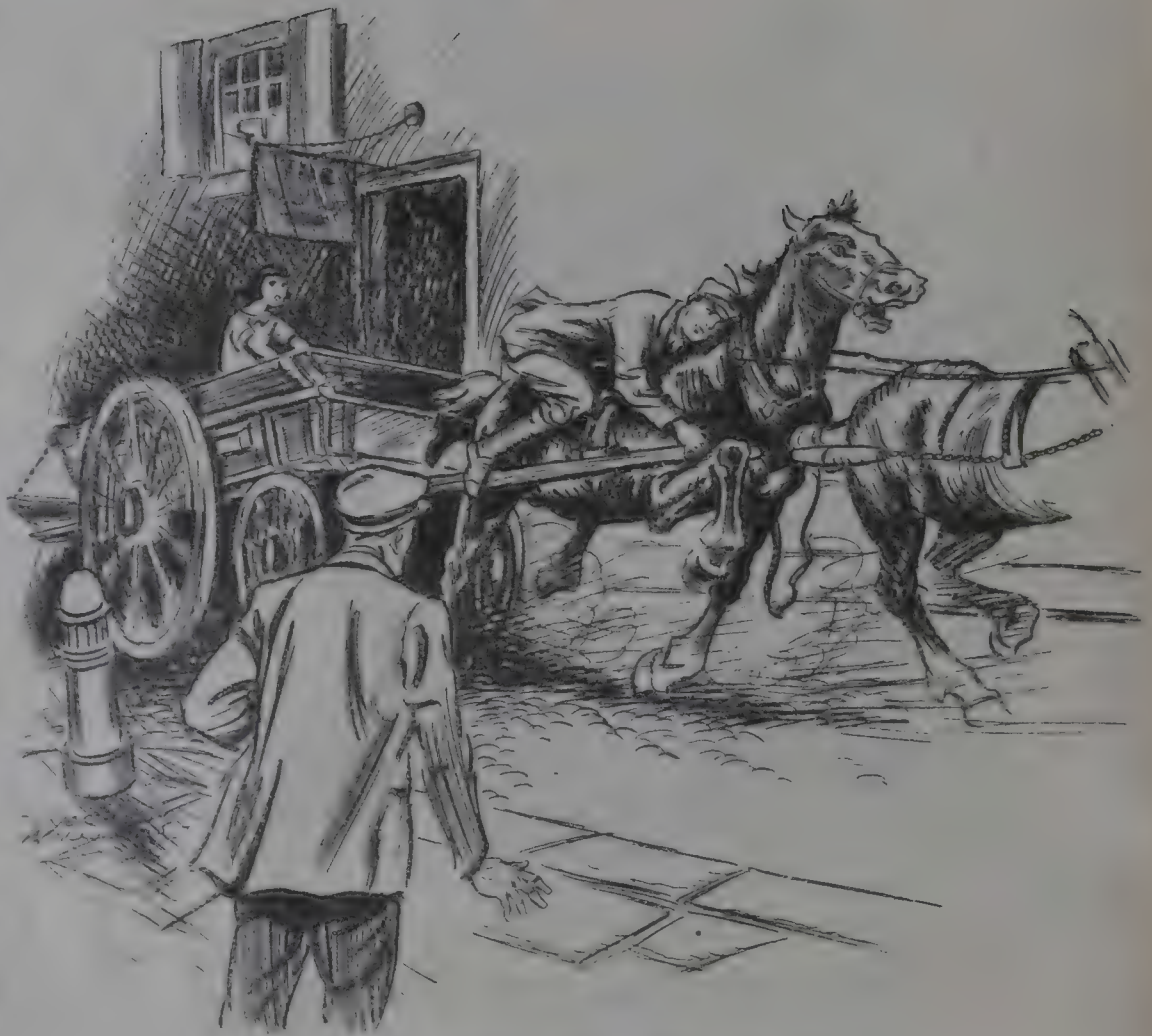
daring thing I ever saw done in my life, and the bravest. He'd run after the waggon, jumped in over the tail-board, got on the shafts, and then on the back of the shaft-horse, where he gripped the reins and managed to pull the horses up. If he hadn't they'd have dashed on and been over the quay side two minutes later."

"And that's the chap Stephen Hill called a coward!" remarked Dick Brown: "and we all believed him. I wonder what he calls him now?"

"I can tell you," John Bailey answered. "After Petherick had pulled up the horses Hill appeared on the scene, panting with running, his face grey with fright. He snatched little Molly out of the waggon, and held her tight without speaking for a minute, then he went up to Petherick, who was all of a tremble and white as a sheet, and began to thank him. But Petherick stopped him; he didn't want thanks he said, and walked away muttering something about having left his milk cart. Hill gazed after him; then he caught sight of me and I told him what I'd seen."

"He's a brave man," he said, "'a brave man, and a real Christian!'"

"Aye," nodded John Bailey. "Maybe," he added thoughtfully, "he's a brave man *because* he's a real Christian."



"It was the most daring thing I ever saw"

And he was right. Sam Petherick had been quite aware he was risking his life in so daringly stopping the runaway horses, but he had known he was only doing his duty as a Christian, and had been content to trust the result to God.

ELEANORA H. STOOKE

It is said that you cannot get more out of a bottle than you put in it. That is an error. Besides what you put in, you can get out of it—an aching head, a sick stomach, a lost situation, and perhaps a fine of five shillings, or a few days in prison.

C. H. SPURGEON

You are rich if you want no more.

### THE SHARER OF THE TRACK

Not one who scowls when rainy is the sky;  
Not one who frowns at every upward road;  
Not one who grumbles where the rough stones lie—  
Groaning beneath his load.

Not one who sees the cloud before the blue;  
Not one who finds the fault before the grace;  
Not one who scorns the work he has to do—  
Seeking a prouder place.

He's not the man to comrade us those miles  
Of life's grand journey down the unseen way.  
We need brave souls, big hearts, and valiant smiles,  
To find God's Heaven here in the workaday!

LILIAN GARD

# Her Talent

By ELEANOR CLARE

ON Saturdays, Cissie Dodd was supposed to help her father in the shop; but she was upstairs in the parlour on this particular Saturday, sitting on the piano stool. She knew he hated to disturb her while she practised, and she was listlessly turning over some music when—

"Ciss!" he called from the foot of the stairs, "just give me a hand wi' this case of Jersey potatoes!"

"I was just going to practise, Dad," she called back.

"Well; it won't take you a minute. You've been going to practise for the last twenty minutes, and you haven't started yet!" Hearing her light tread across the floor, he added, apologetically: "These sudden showers—it's real April weather this year."

She followed him to the door, and the rain splashed on his iron-grey hair as he bent forward to raise the heavy cask, so she helped to push it across the floor beside the green peas that had also come from Jersey.

"You've been having lessons now for three years—ever since you were thirteen," he remarked, tilting the box into position. "Your teacher says you've the best touch of the three of you. Sympathetic, she calls it; and she says when you've a mind you can read music by sight like billy-oh! But you've not done much of that lately!"

"I'm sure she never said 'billy-oh,' Dad!", Cissie returned with a half laugh.

"Well; it's all the same. It means the same, anyhow. Where's Flossie and Daisy?"

"Gone to a dress-making class. I didn't want to go. It's time they were back. It's nearly tea-time."

"Well, you'd better get it ready, for here they are!" he exclaimed, catching sight of his daughters. They were crossing the road.

But an inquiry as to the price of peas claimed his attention, so the girls went through the shop into the kitchen. They had no sooner entered, however, than Flossie saw the butcher pass the window.

"We'll have our shoulder of lamb cheaper next Easter Sunday," exclaimed Daisy, mischievously. Flossie's blush as she ran to the door was not lost on the observant Daisy.

Although Flossie was only three years older than Cissie, she had been "mother" to her

sisters ever since the death of Mrs. Dodd, five years ago, when Daisy was only eleven. Having given the order to her devoted admirer, Flossie shut the door and gazed reproachfully at Cissie, who had flung herself on the sofa with a book. Daisy was practising upstairs.

"You might set the table, Cis. Daisy has to go for her music lesson at five o'clock."

"There's always something to do in this house!" exclaimed Cissie, petulantly. "I wish I'd gone to business; but then, I'd have had to leave when you marry."

"However can I think of marrying and leave Dad to depend on you!" was the gentle retort. "That's the reason you weren't sent to business, so's you could take my place."

Cissie proceeded to set the table without further comment, and Flossie went into the scullery to experiment on the new gas-cooker. Twenty minutes later the delicious smell of scones brought Daisy and her father into the kitchen; then Flossie came in, hot and hurried, carrying a large tray with a teapot and a pile of hot buttered scones.

"I forgot to tell you what my music teacher said last Tuesday," remarked Daisy, when they were all seated round the table. "She said: 'Cissie is so thin and pale, and has such mournful brown eyes, and she moves about so slowly. Is she delicate?'"

Daisy good-humouredly mimicked the voice of her teacher, and her eyes sparkled over the edge of the cup as she drank her tea.

"And what did *you* say?" asked Cissie, helping herself to another scone.

"I told her you'd the biggest appetite in the house. You've just taken two scones to my one. And I told her you don't like work. She's going to give her Bible-class girls a party, so she wants us to take turns at the piano for dancing."

"But I can't play!"

"What?" exclaimed the grocer, so astonished that he stopped with a scone half-way to his mouth.

"What?" echoed Flossie. "It's the only thing you can do!"

"Yes. It's the only talent you've got," muttered her father.

"I'm too nervous to play before strangers. I'll make mistakes."

"But what does it matter for dancing?"



## Her Talent

expostulated Daisy, a tinge of vexation in her voice. "It means I'll have to play all the time, and I'm so fond of dancing. Do play!"

"No!" returned Cissie emphatically. "The moment I felt responsible, I'd break down. Don't ask me. I can't!"

Silence reigned for some minutes. Even Daisy was subdued, for her disappointment was keen. Mr. Dodd was gazing earnestly at Cissie when the tinkle of the shop-bell called him away.

"Dad looked as if he'd like to spank you!" exclaimed Daisy, as she gathered the cups on the tray.

"Daisy dear, get ready for your lesson, or you'll be late," said her eldest sister, taking the tray from her.

"Get up, Cis, do! You're always the first to sit down and the last to get up. Wash the tea-things for Floss. You know she has the accounts to do, my dress to finish, and heaps of other things you know nothing about. What-ever shall we do when she's married?"

"Oh, that's as far off as ever. 'Tom said just a few minutes ago——"

But she broke off suddenly. Cissie was gathering up the rest of the things. Flossie's sweet, patient smile had conquered. When all was cleared away, she ventured once again to ask her sister to play on Tuesday.

"I said no, and I mean it!" declared Cissie.

Flossie left the room, and a few minutes later Cissie heard her strumming over some dance music. She knew Flossie didn't like dance music; that she was practising it for Daisy's sake. She shrugged her shoulders, picked up her book again and tried to read.



"What?" exclaimed the grocer

But when Tuesday came, Cissie was in the background. She didn't like games; and she couldn't help seeing how popular her sisters were, and how good-naturedly they took turns at the piano so that others could have a good time.

As they walked home, Flossie and Daisy discussed the prospect of a dance on the Rectory lawn in May. The Bible-class teacher had said that, as Cissie didn't seem to have enjoyed herself, it wasn't worth while asking her again. Cissie was reflecting on this. She was very quiet.

Mr. Dodd didn't expect his little housekeeper to go to church on Sunday mornings. Daisy was ready in her new frock; and Cissie stood, fingering the red beads she wore round her neck, her eyes following her father's movements. He was looking for his Church service.

She decided that if he asked her, she would go to church. But she had refused so often that he was weary of asking her, and he didn't do so. The surprise came as quite a shock to her. Flossie didn't even ask her to help with the dinner, and she went upstairs with a horrible feeling of loneliness. She argued the matter out with herself as she made her bed: "I

## Her Talent

ought to be happy. Why am I not? This is just what I ought to want—not to be bothered.” But she sighed. She could not get away from the fact that she was not wanted by any one.

In the afternoon, a bright fire flickered in the parlour grate. Cissie was curled up in the old chair, her brown dress showing up against the green plush upholstery. Mr. Dodd came in, and glanced approvingly round the room as he proceeded to light his pipe.

There on the chiffonier was the silver cup he had won for running, when a boy. How proud his wife had been of that! And the same old sofa cushions, a little the worse for wear. The girls kept everything just as Mother would like it. The only cause for anxiety was Cissie. She was not like the others—not now.

She used to play the hymns that had been sung in church; but lately, she was so reluctant, when asked to play, that he had lost heart. Daisy and Flossie had taken some daffodils to the cemetery.

“Why didn’t you go with them?” he asked; “the fresh air would have done you good.”

“I wasn’t asked.” Her lips drooped in self-pity as she gazed into the fire.

He watched her attentively. He knew that it must have been her own fault. After a while, he began:

“When I was a boy, Cis, I read a story; possibly because I had to. I wasn’t much interested in it, for it’s only now that I am beginning to appreciate it. You’ve heard the story yourself often. It’s about a man who went to a far country, and gave his servants money to use during his absence. Two of them doubled it, but one to whom he gave less hid it; and the master was so angry when he returned, that he took it away from him altogether. Now, that story’s called the parable of the talents. You’ve got your talent—music; but it’s being taken away from you because you don’t make use of it.”

“But Dad. That parable of the talents means money, not a talent like music. You’ve just said so yourself.”

“Well, it means the same. It means wasted opportunities. I reckon a good many of us in my young days didn’t understand it. But it’s all the same. It means the same.”

He walked across to the small table by the window, and took from a shelf beneath a large Bible.

“Now, it’s worth your while just to find that part and contrast it with your own life.”

“Contrast it with my own life!” echoed Cissie.

“Yes. Just to see why *you* haven’t got a merry twinkle in your eyes like Daisy, or why you haven’t got that look of quiet happiness that’s in Flossie’s eyes.”

“But Flossie has grey eyes—like you.”

“It’s nothing to do with the colour of the eyes. It’s something that shines *in* the eyes. Something they’ve got in themselves and you haven’t, because you’re hiding your talent. Find the story, my dear, and you’ll see what I mean.”

“It’s somewhere in Matthew, I know,” she murmured, beginning to scan the pages of the Gospel.

He sat opposite and waited, puffing the while at his pipe as he gazed at her dear features—like her mother’s. By-and-by, she began to reckon on her fingers.

“Well?” he asked.

“Flossie has five talents,” she replied, in a low, earnest voice: “housekeeping, book-keeping, dressmaking, cooking, and music.”

“Yes. And they’ve doubled themselves because of the joy and comfort she gives others,” concluded her father.

“Daisy with her music has one talent—no. She’s learning dressmaking,” Cissie corrected herself. “That’s two talents——”

“Which her sunny disposition and readiness to help her sister have doubled! You’ve only to look at their happy faces to know that they’ve entered into the Kingdom of Heaven; as near as one can get, anyway, in this world,” he said gravely.

Cissie remained silent, thinking of her wasted opportunities.

“You’ll need me when Flossie marries,” she murmured, after a long pause. “I’ll have to take care of you and Daisy.”

The grocer smiled at the thought of Cissie taking care of any one. But when he saw her rosy mouth curve upward and a new light of resolution creep into her eyes, his heart gave a great bound. She ran across the room to the piano.

“Dad, what were the hymns sung in church this morning? We’ve time to run through them before I put the kettle on for tea. And wouldn’t it be jolly to have tea up here? I know Flossie’d like it, because Tom’s coming.”




## Her Talent

"It'll certainly make Tom feel a bit more hopeful," laughed her father.

Cissie laughed also. She never forgot the lesson of the hidden talent. At the garden party, as on other occasions, she gave much

happiness by her skilful playing on the piano; and when Flossie set up housekeeping on her own account she felt that she was leaving the happiness of her father and Daisy in good hands.



# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village  
by Amos E. Denner

### An Unpopular Landlord

THE tiniest cottage in Moortor was tenanted by old Peter Johnson, the one-time village thatcher.

On fine summer days the old man was always to be found amongst his flowers in the little garden surrounding his abode. He had come to the eventide of a long life, and now enjoyed a period of quiet peace and contentment.

The picturesque appearance of the little cottage appealed to all lovers of the artistic, and no wonder! for the tiny, one-storied, two-roomed place was almost concealed by green and yellow and crimson, where the canary creeper and climbing roses stretched forth their slender arms to embrace the old-fashioned thatched roof.

If it were at all possible to tell a man's character by his garden, then the sight of the sweet blaze of colour in old Peter Johnson's "beauty patch" would speak of the best things in human nature.

Hard by the low portals of the front door

was a plant of sweet-perfumed southernwood. But this plant was never called by its botanical name in Moortor; instead, it was known locally as "lad's love." And although nearly every garden in Moortor possessed its growth of "lad's love," yet none flourished so sturdily as the shrub in the old man's plot.

"I suppose it grows so well because I always like to give plenty of it away," he would say, in answer to any one's expressed admiration of the hardy growth. Here the old fellow would stoop and pluck a spray for the admirers, adding as he did so: "'Tis just the same with the sweet blessing of God's love. . . . You get more of it if you pass it on to others."

Old Granny Whitlock and Peter Johnson both attended the same place of worship, and one day, as the old lady was passing her neighbour's house, she stopped, and leant over the garden wall for a few minutes' "crack," as she jokingly termed it.

"I didn't hear your voice in the prayer-meeting last night, Peter," she said, after making some suggestion for the better position of some delicately tinted lupins which did not seem to be flowering of their best.

The old man shook his head suggestively.

"'Fraid I did not quite feel like it, Mary," was his reply, and there was something in the

## Moortor Folk

tone of his words that prompted Granny Whitlock to seek further information.

The two old people had known each other for a young lifetime, and had watched themselves going down the hill of their days together. Years before, when old Peter Johnson's wife had lain with a lingering illness, it was Granny Whitlock who had tended her with loving care. And when the time had come for the invalid to enter the valley of the shadow, it was this good soul who had performed the last sad offices for the beloved dead, and who, moreover, had sought to hearten the widower with the true consolation that comes from the hope of immortal life.

"How do you mean . . . didn't feel like it?" she queried. It was not often that the old man's voice was silent on prayer-meeting nights, and his gift of utterance as well as a certain "unction" that was always profitable to others, made his omission all the more noticeable.

"Well, you see," answered Peter Johnson, plucking, more or less abstractedly, at the shrub of "lad's love," "'twas all on account of my landlord—Mr. Job Strong—being present. He had a real good innings . . . prayed for twenty minutes and——"

"And then asked the Lord to forgive his shortcomings," interjected the old lady. And, by the way she said this, it was obvious that her opinion of Mr. Job Strong was not altogether of the best.

Peter Johnson's face lit up with a sad little smile.

"I could believe in the man's prayers a lot better if I didn't happen to know that he wants to turn me out of my little home," he said quietly. "'Tis all over Moortor that he isn't getting enough rent for his cottage. He says some visitors are willing to pay him three times more money just to rent it for a few months in the summer."

"The money-grabbing mortal," exclaimed Granny Whitlock indignantly. "He seems to forget that the place is what you have made it with your own hand. . . . Goody me! the cottage and garden were nothing more than a ramshackle 'booby's home' when you took it over thirty years ago. Not a penny has he spent in repairs, I'll warrant."

"That's so," sadly assented the old man, "and I suppose if I have to clear out of here, 'twill mean the Big House for me. I——"

"Now look here, Peter!" broke in the old lady protestingly, "none of that sort of talk.

You know very well I don't much hold with workhouses. The only sort of 'Big House,' that you will go to is the one above. But you aren't gone from your 'little house,' yet," she added brightly. "So cheer up, old friend. . . . Job Strong may be a mighty fine man in his own estimation, but maybe he'll be made to learn a lesson in kindness to his neighbour yet. I'm going to have a word with the neighbours about this business. Nothing like seeking good advice. Meanwhile, pay your rent, and don't worry."

For once, however, Peter Johnson failed to respond to the cheery efforts of his neighbour in years. It was evident that the impending eviction from his beloved little place was a heavy burden upon the old man's spirit.

"I wish I could look at things more lightly," he said pathetically, "but you know, Mary, I'm a bit of a gardener as well as a thatcher, and I know it sometimes goes bad with old plants when they're transplanted."

Soon after breakfast one Friday morning a furniture cart stopped at Peter Johnson's gate, and it seemed that all the village turned out to see what was to happen.

The driver of the cart commenced to pile the household effects upon the vehicle, and all the time poor old Peter Johnson looked on in an absent sort of way. He seemed strangely oblivious to what was being enacted about him, and of all the spectators he was the least moved.

Ten minutes later Job Strong strolled up, and there was a muttering amongst the women onlookers. Suddenly one of the women burst out with some stinging direct exclamations of disgust and reproach.

It was Ned Payne's wife, and the local cobbler's slovenly partner was hardly the most effective one to make a protest as she stood there in ragged, untidy dress and dishevelled hair.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mr. Ananias Christian!" said she. "Turning a poor old man out of his home at his time of life! I'd like my husband to have five minutes with the likes of you. He'd tell you something. . . . Seems to me, you'd turn a snail out of its shell, you would!"

By this time old Granny Whitlock, who was also present, had succeeded in getting the woman to desist, but not before Job Strong's hands had commenced to twitch, and his face had flushed with anger.



## Moortor Folk

"What's it got to do with you?" he jerked. "'Tis my own property, isn't it? You mind your own business, Mrs. Payne, and go home and wash your face. . . . Clear out of the way, woman!"

He walked up to Peter Johnson. "There's some mortar work wanted on the back wall," he said. . . . "Your expense, of course. . . . And that cracked window pane. . . . You'll pay me for it, Peter?"

The old man passed his hand before his eyes as though waking from a bad dream, and was about to make reply, when, just at that moment, another group of younger men hurried up the road. One carried a bucket of tar, another had

a long-handled brush, whilst a third had a bag of feathers on his back, and during the slight commotion which their appearance caused, old Peter Johnson had taken a spade, and was about to dig up his favourite plant of southern-wood.

"Hold on there!" Job Strong shouted to the old man. "Leave that plant alone. . . . It's mine."

Peter Johnson looked at him, and his old hands began to shake.

"You don't mean to say that you won't let me take the 'lad's love' away with me?" he questioned pathetically.

"Put away your spade," was the cold answer.



"Leave that plant alone. It's mine"

## Moortor Folk

"Everything rooted in the soil belongs to me, and must stay as it is. That's law."

Angry murmurs from the newly arrived group of men caused Job Strong to glance wonderingly in their direction. "A lot of sentimental fuss," he scowled impatiently.

Then it was that old Peter Johnson fumbled in his pocket, and produced an ancient purse.

"Let me buy the plant from you," he said earnestly. "The 'lad's love' is more precious to me than——"

A sudden movement in the crowd interrupted the old man's words, and in less time than it takes to tell, Job Strong found himself surrounded by a ring of women.

"Here! Stand away! What's your little game?" shouted the man, now thoroughly frightened at the preparations which were being made with the tar and feathers.

"'Tisn't a game at all, Job Strong," said a fellow who acted as spokesman. "And

you'll quickly find out all about it, if you as much as try to get away from these women, until we have unloaded Peter Johnson's things back in his cottage again. Good thing you can't hear our thoughts."

And amidst much twitting, and sundry suggestive hints to the unwilling prisoner, every bit of furniture was soon replaced in old Peter Johnson's little home.

"All Granny Whitlock's doings, I'll be bound," growled Job Strong when, at last, he was allowed his liberty. "More will be heard about this." He was hardly prepared, however, for the still more remarkable experience awaiting him in the near future.

"He doesn't seem to be properly cured yet," said some one suggestively. "'Tis a rare pity, but he ought to know Moortor folk better. But we'll learn him something. . . . The canting humbug!"

*(To be continued.)*

## Thoughts for Thinkers

NEVER grumble nor mumble.

Take things as they come ;  
Eat crust as well as crumb.

Never too old to turn, never too late to learn.

"If not too old to sing we are not too old to repent."

Never dare to despair while God answers prayer.

Our idle days are Satan's busy days.

Pay as you go, and nothing you'll owe.

Punish your enemies by doing them good.

Pure water is good within and without.

Certain drinkers have never tried cold water, they have no idea what a delicate taste it has, nor how refreshing it is when it comes in contact with the skin.

Plead for Jesus, for He pleads for you.

Save while you have, and give while you live.

See the face of God before you see the face of man. First speak with God in prayer in the morning before you have a word to say to your fellow mortals.

Talk, talk, talk, and it brings in nought.  
Work, work, work, and the bread is bought.

Thankfulness makes much of little.

"Be the meal of beans and peas,  
God be thanked for those and these.  
Have we bread, or have we fish,  
All are fragments from His dish."

The life of love is better than the love of life.

To forget a wrong is the best revenge.  
"Lord, teach us to forgive : to learn of Thee !  
How very little to forgive have we."

To do good, one must first be good.

"A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

To sweeten your morsel, share it.

Too soon is soon mended ;  
Too late can't be defended.

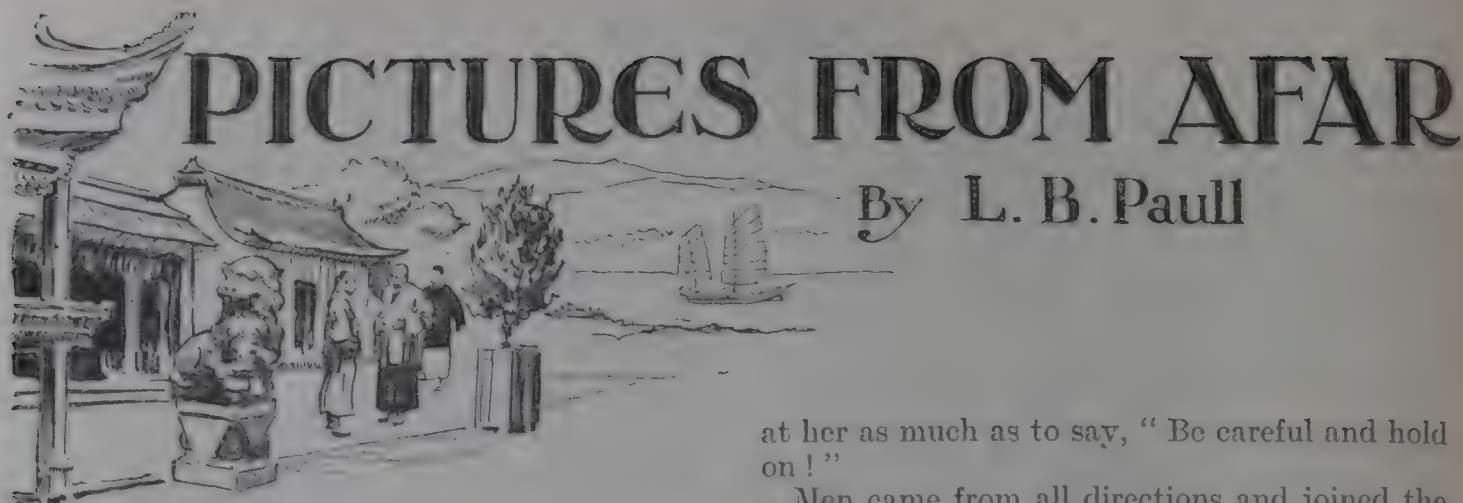
Tell thy God thy wish and care,  
Turn thy sorrow into prayer.

We are bound to be honest, but not to be rich.

We ought to be doing, and to be doing what we ought.

C. H. SPURGEON





# PICTURES FROM AFAR

By L. B. Pauli

## Kidnapping

IN the vast disorganised land of China the army is as badly managed as everything else. For more than two years the soldiers were left unpaid and naturally many of them mutinied. They roamed the country in desperate gangs, ever adding to their numbers when a new means of living suggested itself.

Kidnapping for ransom would be profitable, so they immediately set to work to carry it out.

An American lady lived with a missionary and his wife, and all three had done splendid work for the people. One night they were awaked by the sound of three shots so they dressed hastily and went downstairs. The door was burst open and a bullet hit the missionary who fell, exclaiming—"I am shot." He tried to rise but had to lie down again, and the moonlight, streaming through the windows revealed a little pool of blood at his side. The missionary's wife now fell, exclaiming as her husband had done—"I am shot." Then the bandits, turning to the American lady said, "We thought we should get three, but there is only you, so come along with us."

She was taken down the main street, a crowd of bandits round her, dressed in foreign coats and skirts which they had seized. One man tried to get on a new heavy dress but found it too small, so he threw it on the ground. She picked it up and was thankful for it as a wrap, for in her hurry she had forgotten her scarf and gloves.

"Can you walk fast?" the bandits asked, and when she replied that it was impossible for her to keep up with them they procured her a horse. That horse became her friend, the only comfort in her terrible plight. It seemed almost human, strong, sure-footed; when it came to precipitous places it would look round

at her as much as to say, "Be careful and hold on!"

Men came from all directions and joined the band of evil until it became a horde of fifteen to twenty thousand men. They travelled day and night, only pausing for a few hours when worn out. At such times she slept on a little straw watched by three bandits.

One day a severe encounter took place between the bandits and the soldiers who were still loyal to the army. This lasted many hours. Their prisoner lay in a ditch, with bullets singing about her. "But," she writes, "I felt perfectly calm even there, knowing that my Saviour was at my side."

When the battle was over the bandits pressed on, nervous and desperate, and there was a mad chase up and down the mountains. At times they would fall off their horses, or those walking would be pushed down and trampled to death. Horses fell into ditches and between rocks, and there was no time to save them. In vain the poor prisoner pleaded for food, the answer was always the same, "Not time for you to eat." She asked for water, but they said, "No time." Even when they had to wade through mountain streams they would not stop to drink. "When the drops of water splashed my clothes," she writes, "I would carefully bring them to my lips. It seemed so soothing for the moment."

Suddenly the mad rush ceased and they came to a lonely spot where they held a hurried consultation. They said the prisoner was the cause of all their trouble, for if they had had no foreigner as captive the soldiers would not have fought them, so they gave orders for her execution. She was told where to stand, then all was ready. She asked one of the officers if she might write a line to her daughter.

"What do you want to write?" he asked.

"I want to tell her you are going to shoot me."

The officer hesitated, then he and his men began to talk in whispers, when to her surprise

## Kidnapping

she was hurried on to her horse again and the whole company moved onwards. They travelled all night, crossing a river which was so deep that she got her feet soaked, not being able to lift them high enough. At length they stopped at a place where they made a fire, but told her to sit in a corner too far away to dry her feet.

After a brief rest they set out again down a hill, across a stream and in amongst a few fir trees. In that lonely place they told her once more that she was to be shot, and a bandit loaded his gun.

"Why do you want to shoot me?" she asked. "I am not afraid to die, but it will do you no good."

After a moment's hesitation he lowered his gun.

"I do not want to kill you," he said.

She saw her chance and began to talk to them about Jesus. They listened attentively, and one of them said with a sigh, "Ah, this is a sad life!" Then turning to his chief officer he said, "I cannot kill this foreign woman: if you want it done you must get some one else to do it, for I will not." This led to

another consultation, and once more she was saved.

From time to time as they journeyed she began to talk to them about God.

"If your God is such a great God, why does He not help you?" they asked. She replied, "If He had not helped me I should have been dead long ago."

At one point of their journey they were joined by some well-dressed Chinese, and a faint hope sprang up in the breast of the prisoner. Could it be that they had come to save her? She was again ordered on to her horse, and they rode from late at night till early morning, when they stopped at the foot of a mountain. They got down to rest by the roadside, and one of the villagers was ordered to



bring her a bowl of millet porridge. It was then that one of the well-dressed Chinese came up quite close to her and whispered that she was released, and that he had been the means of doing it. A song of praise was on her lips, and later she sent a message of thanks across the seas to the many Christian friends who had remembered her in their prayers.

## A Wonderful Woman!

THEY say she's a wonderful woman  
That little old soul up there,  
In the top-floor front where the window-box  
Is bright with the asters fair.  
She's shabby and poor and homely—  
But rich as a woman can be!  
For every one goes, whatever his woes,  
And pours them out at her knee.

They say she's a wonderful woman!  
For troubles smooth over and fade,  
When a wrinkled hand with its gentle touch  
On wearying heads is laid.  
And crosses are never so heavy  
And burdens are halved of care,—  
When you've taken them straight, be it early  
or late,  
Up the top-floor's rickety stair.

The children with bumps and bruises,  
The mothers with hearts that break,  
Each lassie and lad, be they naughty or sad,  
Finds solace for every ache!  
I think she has known much sorrow—  
Her forehead is seamed and lined,—  
But her dear old face has a healing grace,  
And oh, *she is ever so kind!*

HILARY BROWN



# The Prince and the Match Boy

ONE night, about eleven o'clock, two gentlemen were walking across St. James' Park, near the Palace, in London, one of whom was the father of King George. He was then the Prince of Wales. A little lad who got his living by selling matches ran after them, crying, "Matches! Matches! Will you buy a box of matches?"

The Prince heard the tired, eager voice, and, putting his hand in his pocket, gave him a coin.

"Thank'ee, kindly," said the lad, and dropped behind. Going under a lamp, he found that it was half-a-crown, and he ran after the gentlemen, saying: "Please, sir, you thought you were giving me a penny, but you gave me half-a-crown."

The Prince was much pleased with the boy's honesty, and said kindly: "You can keep it, Matches; give me a box."

As the boy dropped behind, not knowing that it was the Prince, he said, "If you ain't the Prince of Wales, you ought to be"; and the Prince heard it. He said that it was the greatest compliment ever paid him.

From that time there was a kind of friendship between the two. When the Prince saw him in Pall Mall, where he used to sell his matches, he would notice him, and call him by his new name—Matches; and the boy came to understand that he was the Prince.

One very stormy night, when the Prince came home late in his carriage to the Palace, he saw what seemed to be a heap of rags lying against the steps,

and sent one of the servants to see what it was. It was Matches, who was terribly ill, coughing and burning with fever. They brought him to the Prince, who called a kindly policeman that was on duty at the Palace, and told him to take the lad in his own carriage to the nearest hospital.

*"All Thy works shall praise Thee, and Thy saints shall bless Thee."*

The beautiful sunshine on flower and on tree  
Seems like the smile of God to me.  
The days of storm and of fog are past,  
And the glorious sun shines forth at last;  
While the birds as they carol on feathered wing  
Herald the glad approach of spring;  
And the delicate blooms that jewel the sod  
Proclaim the power and the love of God.

E. F. EVANS

The boy knew it was a policeman, and said:

"Where are you taking me? I haven't done nothing wrong, have I?"

But he was very glad when he

found himself in a clean nightgown and a warm bed, with the kindly face of a good nurse looking down on him.

For several days he lay between life and death, then slowly began to be better, and was able to sit up. He was specially fond of a book of pictures of the sea, the war-ships and sailors. One day the Prince came to see him, and said—

"Well, Matches, are you better?"

"Yes, thank you, Prince," said he. "I'll soon be all right."

"What would you like to be, when you grow up?" said the Prince.

"Please, Prince," he said, "I'd like to be an Admiral."

The Prince was much pleased with the lad's choice; and, when he was quite well, sent him to a Naval School, where he stayed three or four years.

At the end of that time, on going to his first ship, he came to say good-bye to his friend, who had then become King Edward VII. After a little talk the King showed him the box of

## The Prince and the Match Boy

matches he had bought when first they met, and said—

“As long as you live a good and useful life, I am going to keep that box there, and I hope you will never do anything to make me ashamed of having been your friend.”

Then the boy, who had now grown up to be quite tall and big, gave the King a salute in the proper fashion, and said—

“I hope, sir, that you will never have reason to be ashamed of having been my friend.”

There my story must stop, because I have no further tidings about the

boy; but I should like to think that whenever he was asked to do things that were mean or bad, he would say to himself: “I mustn’t do that, because the King wouldn’t like it.”

Don’t you think that it must have been splendid to be a friend of the great King? I wonder what his mother thought about it, when he told her. She was very poor, and lived in a tiny room, but it made her very proud and happy!

But there’s something better for every one who reads this story. I heard of a boy who was very ill in a poor home, where the bed was very

[Continued on p. 64.]



In the land of the ancient Pharaohs

There is a good deal of unrest in modern Egypt, which, after having been brought to ruin by the mismanagement and sloth of native rulers, has now been raised by the fostering care of Britain to its ancient prosperity. But the unrest is largely confined to the towns, and does not avail to disturb the peace of such scenes as that shown above, which have hardly changed for thousands of years.



## The Prince and the Match Boy

hard, and they wanted to take him to a more comfortable one; but he refused, saying, "I don't want to die easy, when *He* died so hard."

Who was *He*, do you think? It was our Lord Jesus, Who died on the Cross for us. That boy had heard about Him

in the Sunday school. He is the great Friend of boys and girls, and men and women! Be sure to take Him to be your Friend and King, and never do anything that would make Him ashamed to own you. Often say to yourself: "Jesus is *my* great Friend!"

F. B. MEYER

## A Father's Care

WHEN James Garfield, President of the United States, was a boy, he drove the horse for a canal boat. One dark night he fell into the water and was very nearly drowned. The fact that his life was preserved made a deep impression on the boy. He felt that he had been kept, and kept for a purpose; and this conviction made him determine to make the very best of his life.

I remember a similar incident, and a similar conviction in my own experience, and I dare say some of my readers can say the same. Some signal escape from danger and death made you feel that you were kept, kept by God, and kept by Him for some purpose, and that conviction gave a new meaning and dignity to your life.

It is a great thing in life to feel that, as little children, we are kept, kept in food and clothing by a father's labour, kept from sin and danger by a father's and a mother's love. It is a still greater thing to feel that we are kept, and kept for a purpose, by a heavenly Father's care.

Most of us, I dare say, know something of this keeping power of God. But much of it we shall never know till the end of the day.

Dr. David Smith, in one of his books, tells the story of a little yacht, which

was sailing among the western isles of Scotland. One night, after she was anchored, a gale sprang up. To remain where they were was impossible. But the captain, who was familiar with the coast, knew of a splendid anchorage some distance off, and he made it in the dark.

In the morning the owner came on deck, and looked on the scene—a quiet little loch, encircled by purple hills. Then he turned round and looked at the entrance, a narrow slit of water guarded by cruel rocks, and, turning to the captain, he said, in awe-stricken tones—

"Captain, did we really come through there in the dark?"

It is a parable of life. Like the owner of that little yacht, we are wonderfully kept, guarded, and guided, by God. Some of His keeping, love, and wisdom we know. But some of it we shall never know, till the day break, and the shadows flee away.

When this passing world is done,  
When has sunk yon glaring sun,  
When we stand with Christ in glory,  
Looking o'er life's finished story,  
Then, Lord, shall we fully know,  
Not till then, how much we owe.

Meanwhile, assured that this keeping power of God is there in our lives, we can go forward with fearless hearts.



# LIGHT IN THE HOME

No. 41. NEW SERIES

MAY, 1925



**"I cut it back and graft in a better sort"**

*Registered at the General Post Office, London, for transmission by Canadian and Newfoundland Magazine Post.*



# A Life Transformed

"NO, Ray, I will not let you speak to Rose. As things are I'm astonished at your asking. What have you to offer her?"

"Not very much yet. I've been so unfortunate. The luck will turn, and my father will help me. I believe she likes me, and I would give my life to make her happy."

"At whose expense? I don't want to be rude, my lad, for somehow I like you, but the trouble with you is you're bone lazy! Until you can give up your easy-going ways and show some grit Rose herself would have nothing to say to you. She's no idler! As to luck, there's no such thing. You had a soft bringing-up, and by your own showing your father started you in several things and they all failed because you didn't put your soul into them. Music! Oh yes, I don't deny you can sing a good tenor and play the fiddle all right, but you can't live on music out here. You may make a trifle now and then by it, but without those remittances from home where would you have been?"

"Take my advice and learn fruit-growing in earnest. There's money and health and happiness in it. Splendid land here, and better still across Winston prairie, and work to be had in abundance. Go and get your hand in."

"You don't know anything about manual work? Ask the Lord to teach you and to give you a new nature that will love toil. He can change laziness into industry, and casual ways into steadfastness, and make even a waster into a king among men."

"Ask Him, lad, and I'll ask Him too. You want making anew. When I have a poor tree I cut it back and graft in a better sort. And the new nature overcomes the old, and the sap throws itself into the graft and gives me fruit worth having. A bad tree takes up as much room as a good one, and won't do for me. It's a puzzle to me how God can have so much patience with human cumberers of the ground and leave 'em to enjoy His mercies so long."

"You're made for something better, Ray. Put your life in His hands."

There was a new look of resolve in the young man's face as he said, "Thank you, Mr. Erwyn. I will."

"Tea's ready, father," called a clear voice behind them, and a bonny girl came to greet the visitor. Her colour deepened as she shook hands and said, "Have you brought the duet?"

"Mr. Davis won't be able to stay to-night,

Rosie," her father answered. "He's going away."

"Where?" she asked quickly.

"Across Winston prairie," said Ray; "and I'm going to work in earnest."

"With spade and plough  
We bring the deserts in."

"But I shall come back—when I've made good."

Rose said good-bye soberly, but there was a new respect in her glance, and her father said heartily, "Come in a year's time, lad, and there'll be a welcome if you've earned it."

Ray Davis went to his cheap lodging in the outskirts of the town with new hopes and desires stirring in his heart.

An invitation to a party awaited him, for he and his violin were in great request, but he had no wish to go. For the first time he saw himself as he really was, a useless hanger-on—content to drift from day to day while others toiled and won. Above all he saw himself worthless before God. By the hard bed he knelt and prayed earnestly: "O God, give me a new heart and a right spirit. Forgive me all these heedless years I have lived without Thee; graft the new nature into my sinful life, and make me a true servant of Jesus and worthy to bear Thy name."

When he rose from his knees he knew that his prayer had been heard, and that he was accepted and pardoned.

That night he wrote and told his father about it, for he knew how glad he would be.

He told him he was going to work in earnest, and that he had enough money for the start and wanted no more sent from home, as he could manage on what he earned.

Next day he bought a strong suit of working clothes and some boots, and made his way to the farm Mr. Erwyn had recommended.

He was fortunate in being taken on at once, but, as the latest "hand," the roughest and hardest tasks were left to him, and his ignorance brought him daily ridicule. His hands were blistered, his back ached with utter weariness, and many a time he was tempted to give up in despair. But not for long. Prayer always helped, and the new yoke he had taken made the burden light.

When his workmates found that he was patient under provocation, and always ready to help others as far as he could, they left off teasing and began to respect him instead.

## A Life Transformed

They could not induce him to join in the revels in which some of them spent their evenings or to squander his earnings in week-ends in town. Ray saved his money with a double hope in his heart—to have a farm of his own some day and Rose to share his prosperity and be the queen of his home and heart.

By the end of his year of probation he had become a hard and efficient worker, and from his evening studies he knew more of the science of fruit culture than men of much longer experience.

Just then came a home letter telling of a legacy of two hundred pounds left by an uncle who had never given him a shilling before. But he had heard of the change in Ray's life and his earnest efforts to "make good" and left him

this money with his love and blessing. With this capital, and his own savings, he might hope to begin in a small way.

When a few days later Ray stood again at Mr. Erwyn's door Rose hardly knew him. Brown and strong and muscular, with the steady light of resolve in his dark eyes and a happy smile—he looked a man to be proud of indeed. Their first hand-clasp told more than words.

Mr. Erwyn did not say "no" this time, though he insisted on another year of waiting. Then on his own place Ray planted and grafted and pruned to his heart's content, and with Rose's help toiled on to success and prosperity.

"The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich."

MARY ROWLES JARVIS



# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village

by Amos E. Denner

### The Village "Orator"

IT was the day following Job Strong's ill-fated attempt to evict poor old Peter Johnson from his little home, and, as may be imagined, Ned Payne, the talkative shoemaker, was not slow to seize upon the event as a vindication of his pet "views," particularly with regard to owners of property.

"There you are!" he exclaimed excitedly, before a group of villagers outside his cottage: "I've been telling you ever since I came to this sleepy hole that this would happen. We Londoners know a sight more than you think. You only snigger at me, though. All the same,

I contend your whole system in Moortor is wrong. You want a new scheme of things here. . . . Think of the object-lesson of yesterday. . . . Here's this Mr. Job Strong—one of the leading religious lights of the village—always prating about the New Jerusalem, and mansions in the skies, yet begrudging a poor old fellow-man the comfort of his little home on earth. All for the sake of adding to his bloated banking account, and—Here! fetch a chair for me to stand on," shouted the self-constituted champion to one of his children standing open-mouthed near by. "Nothing like a proper meeting to thrash out this sort of thing. That's how we folk do in Hyde Park. . . . I'll soon convince you people. . . . This is my chance. . . . But I must have something to stand on."

But when Ned Payne's child appeared with an old sugar-box instead of a chair, and, furthermore, said, in the hearing of all, that the only



## Moortor Folk

chair in the house was "broke," it seemed that a wave of something the reverse of conviction also broke over the little audience.

"As I was saying," the orator continued, after mounting the improvised platform, "the capitalist system is all wrong, and this Mr. Job Strong, one of the leading religious men —"

"Not quite so fast, Ned Payne," came from an interrupter, who happened to be the village baker then on his rounds. "Who says Job Strong is taken at that worth, I should like to know? . . . I'm not for smoothing over his mean trick of yesterday, but before you talk of a fellow like him being reckoned a religious example to us, I reckon you'd best make sure of your standing, like."

A general titter of amusement rose from the little crowd, and Ned Payne shuffled uneasily.

"At any rate," he replied, with a touch of irritation, "we owe a shameful debt to the community if we allow this rich money-bag to grind the faces of the —"

"What about that debt of thirty shillings you owe me for bread?" chimed in the baker, again, much to the cobbler's discomfiture and the obvious enjoyment of the audience. "We may be only simple folk about here, but we believe in 'live and let live' just as much as you London nibs. . . . That 'communie' stuff of yours isn't so easily swallowed. . . . 'Tis you who seem to be the champion 'swallower' hereabouts."

This time, quite a roar

of laughter went up from the crowd at the baker's suggestive hint of Ned Payne's close association with the "Heather Bell" public house, and the man on the box looked foolish.

"That's not the point," he protested, recovering some semblance of anger. "When we talk in Hyde Park we don't allow these side-tracks."



"What about that debt of thirty shillings you owe me for bread?"

## Moortor Folk

I'm talking about what Mr. Job Strong's Christianity makes him do for his fellow-man. . . . We've got to put our foot down with a bang on such victimising. . . . It wants stamping out."

Here the excited orator suited the action to his word by a vigorous stamp on the sugar-box. It proved an unfortunate action, for, with a loud creak, the box completely collapsed, and the next moment Ned Payne found himself sprawling on the ground, to the accompaniment of shrieks of unrestrained laughter from the folk gathered round.

"Come on, neighbours, don't let's waste any more time on this chap," said the baker, shouldering his basket. "We may be born amongst the green country, but we do know how to stand up on our feet. . . . Fancy wanting us to believe that 'tis Christianity that makes Job Strong what he is. . . . 'Tis the *want of it*, in my humble opinion. And as for anybody putting him right—well—I reckon we can best leave that with old Granny Whitlock. She managed yesterday's little business very well, although I could have wished she had let us use the tar and feathers after going to all the trouble to prepare the stuff for Job Strong. . . . But let the cobbler stick to his last, and put his own affairs in order. . . . He don't understand the ways of us Moortor folk."

And soon the little crowd melted away into the quiet life of the village.

\* \* \* \*

Moortor people could never recall Granny Whitlock speaking ill of any one. True, they had to admit the directness of some of her "home thrusts," but never did they hear a word approaching malice on her lips.

On the afternoon of Ned Payne's attempted protest meeting she happened to look in at the cobbler's mean home with some stockings that she had been knitting for the family.

The man, in spite of his ignominious experience earlier in the day, was as irrepressible as ever.

"Supposing, just for argument's sake," he said, doggedly—"only supposing, mind, that I was prepared to admit the existence of the devil. How would you speak of him? He's supposed to be the author of all evil, according to your way of thinking. . . . Now, come on, Mrs. Goody-goody. You're not supposed to speak wrong of anybody. . . . What about it? I've caught you fine this time. What would you say about the devil?" And the chuckle from the cobbler suggested that he had "cornered" Granny Whitlock at last.

But the man had reckoned without thought, as usual, for Granny Whitlock, casting an

amused look at the cobbler, quietly made answer:

"You ask me what I think of the devil, Ned Payne? Well, my man, I think he's very industrious, and if you were only half so hard working 'twould make a world of difference to yourself and everybody else."

Notwithstanding this retort, the shallow man returned to the attack. He was not at all in love with the ways of the people of his adoption, especially with any with whom he had had business dealings. There was the baker, for instance, who had threatened him with the County Court, also the proprietress of the local grocery store, who had stopped all further credit pending the payment of an account which had commenced on the very day of his advent into the village. Doubtless it was these disturbing factors that called forth Mr. Payne's next question to the old lady.

"Supposing you happened to be in my shoes," he said, in a tone of grievance. . . . "I look like failing in business. . . . Can't pay my way, all because those grasping—"

"First thing, I should be thankful I still had my health," broke in the old philosopher.

"Yes, but supposing your health failed; what then?"

"Well,—'tis more than foolish to be standing here 'supposing' to a noodle like you," came the answer, "but if I failed in business and health too, I should try to be sensible. I should know that one was no use without the other. . . . But what's the use of talking to you? You want a change of heart, then there'd be some hope for you."

"Rescue the perishing, like," said the man, with a silly grin.

At this moment, some one came running into the frowsy cottage with startling news.

Some of the Paynes' children had dared each other to walk home from school with their coats over their heads. Three of them had walked straight into the river at its deepest and most dangerous part, and would undoubtedly have been drowned had it not been for the prompt action of no less a person than Mr. Job Strong!

This most hated man in Moortor had performed a plucky deed of rescue. His action was at great cost, however, for his own life now hung on a slender thread.

And in the critical days that followed, as Job Strong tossed wearily on his sick-bed, he learnt things that afterwards altered the whole manner of his life, thanks to the influence of a godliness which had its beautiful outlet in old Granny Whitlock.



# Stolen Sheep

NEW ZEALAND, with its fine towns with their handsome streets and buildings, seems such a civilised country that it is difficult to realise the comparatively short time in which this civilisation has been built up. Less than a hundred years ago Englishmen went there, sometimes at the peril of their lives, owing to the enmity of the Maoris, the native inhabitants of the country. The *Friends' Witness* gives a remarkable instance of the winning over of a Maori chief by the patience and forbearance of a fair-minded Englishman.

In the year 1840, amongst the emigrants was a Quaker named Thomas Mason. He had heard what a good opening there was in the New Colony, and, deciding to join a party which was just starting to form a settlement, he set sail with his wife and two or three children.

It was a very dreary voyage in those days. The emigrants were cooped up in close quarters, and for three or four months they were sailing over the ocean, out of sight and sound of land.

It must have been a very joyful day when at last the ship sailed through the wooded hills that surrounded Wellington harbour and cast anchor in its still waters. How beautiful it looked in the bright summer sunshine, the blue sea surrounded by hills covered with a mass of the most luxuriant vegetation !

Then came the excitement of landing. After so long at sea it seemed almost strange to feel themselves on a firm foundation again.

Mason's land had been purchased from the Company before leaving England, and he found himself settled in the beautiful Hutt Valley with some English settlers near in the same position as himself, and amidst several tribes of Maoris who were, until the troubles a few years later, very pleasant and friendly. This was a great pleasure to him, as he believed that God our Father means all His children to love one another, and that the power of love is far greater than that of the sword or pistol, because the latter can only compel outward submission, whilst love can change a man's whole nature, and thus subdue the evil in him. So when he came in contact with the Maoris, he endeavoured to be kind, and just and friendly, and they on their part met his advances in the same way. When he settled down amongst them he tried to carry out the golden rule of doing to others as you would be done by, and the consequence was a friendly feeling, both on his part and that of his dusky neighbours.

Things were, however, decidedly unsettled, and in the course of a year or so the relationships became much strained. One day he discovered that his flock of sheep had been taken and driven away to the Maori village on the distant hills. This was a great loss, and Thomas Mason felt the whole matter keenly ; not simply the monetary loss, but still more the feeling of animosity which it evinced on the part of those whom he had looked upon as friends.

When the news of his loss reached the ears of his white neighbours, they came to him full of sympathy, but also with advice, which he felt he could not follow.

"You must send to the Government," they said, "and get some soldiers, in order to get them back again. You will never get them otherwise."

But the Quaker shook his head. "If the recovery of my sheep can only be accomplished by the killing of men, I would rather lose my sheep than get them that way."

"But," his neighbours urged, "that would not be at all fair to the rest of us. These dishonest fellows will think that they can spoil us as they like, if you sit down tamely like this to the loss of your sheep. You will be a traitor to the community."

"But I have not said that I will sit down tamely," he replied. "I know a better way than yours. I shall go to Ngawhiti and reason with him about it. I am convinced there must be some misunderstanding. You need not fear, I shall get back my sheep."

Then his neighbours laughed, and told him that he was a fool, that his principles were all very well under ordinary circumstances, but under such provocation they were sheer madness, and he would be doing very wrong both for himself and them if he refused to call in the military.

Finding they could not shake him in his resolution they left, feeling interested in his experiment, whilst at the same time angry that he would not follow their advice : and convinced that by going himself to see the Maori chief he was exposing himself to unnecessary danger.

He himself pondered long over the matter, questioning in his honest soul whether he himself had unwittingly wronged the natives in any way. However, delay was in every way inadvisable, and he might have been seen shortly afterwards wending his way up the hill tracks to the Maori village. Alone and unarmed with any earthly weapon he went ; but he felt he was

## Stolen Sheep

in his Heavenly Father's care, and endeavouring to carry out Christ's own command, and resting in this he could go forward fearlessly.

His approach was seen by the watchful Maoris, and in a short time he was taken to the hut belonging to the Chief. The latter met him without the usual friendliness, and asked for what reason he was favouring him with a visit. Our friend replied by saying that he had reason to believe that he had stolen his sheep, and he wanted them returned to him without delay.

The taking of sheep was candidly admitted by the Chief, whereupon Thomas Mason asked why this had been done, seeing friendly relations had hitherto existed between them. This question led up to a long talk, and our friend found that the Chief on his side had considered himself injured, and had taken this way of retaliation. He was evidently smarting under a sense of injury, and Thomas Mason felt that at that time it was quite useless to prolong the discussion.

He did not see the matter in the light in which the Maori viewed it, but as he took a friendly farewell of the Chief he promised that he would look into the question, and he would see him again upon the subject, but adding, "Anyway, you stole my sheep, and two wrongs will not make one right." Sadly he rode down the hillside, deeply pondering over what he had just heard.

That there was a real grievance in the mind of the Chief there could be no doubt, but was it a reasonable one? At first Mason was inclined to be indignant, it was such a little thing in comparison with the hundred sheep which had been taken from him. Then his mind wandered to other thoughts, and as he dwelt on the patience and love of his Heavenly Father towards himself and how much mercy had been shown to him in Christ, his heart melted within him and a great longing took possession of him to be able to show to this people the better, happier, and truer way of life.

Then he tried to place himself in the position of the Maori, and to view it from his standpoint. Gradually it became clear to him that, without any intention to take an advantage in any way, his actions might have been so construed by a suspicious man, and as he wished to avoid any appearance of evil, he as soon as possible did all in his power to put the matter right.

This done, with a light conscience and a feeling of thankfulness that this had not caused any more serious consequences to those he loved, he took his way again up the hill track that led to the Maori village. He was again conducted to the presence of the Chief and he told what he had done, expressing his regret that there had been this misunderstanding between them, and then asked that, as he had tried to meet the Chief's wishes, his sheep should be returned to him. The Chief, however, would not give the required promise.

When Mason's neighbours heard of his failure,

they again attempted to persuade him to call in the military. But our friend was as firm as ever.

"No, I will not resort to the un-Christian use of arms; but I shall get my sheep."

This time they were quite angry with him. He was worse than a fool, he was a madman, and should be put under restraint. But he kept on his way undaunted, and time after time he climbed the hill, and tried to make the Chief see the wrong which he was doing, and to persuade him to return the sheep, because it was the *right* thing to do.

He was rewarded about a twelvemonth later by seeing the flock being driven back to their old pasture, well cared for and in good condition, and increased in numbers. But infinitely better than the sight of the sheep was the knowledge that he had gained his brother, when the Maori came and asked his forgiveness, and wanted to make with him a vow of friendship.



An old-time Maori chief with his feather mantle and green jade club, which only chiefs could possess





THE morning sun was unclouded, and the trees and hedges were blossoming in sweet air of the month of May, as an old man shut the door of his house and walked to the furthest corner of his field. He held a spade in one hand, like one unaccustomed to it, and a tea-can in the other.

Two men glanced curiously at him as they passed along the road. They were surprised that their new neighbour was going to work in the field so soon—he had only arrived late the previous night. Their smiles broadened at sight of the tea-can, for his house was just a few yards away. “A queer old fish!” said one.

It was rumoured that he was an old sailor who had bought the cottage because he wanted the bit of land attached—about an acre or so; and as he shot a keen glance over the hedge they noticed that under his sea-cap his eyes were blue-grey like the sea.

An abundance of pink may was growing very thickly; it gave a touch of bright colour to the scene. People often stopped to admire it; so when the “queer old fish” put his can in the hedge and began to dig at the root of it, scattering the blossom about, the opinion was that he knew nothing about such things, or he would leave digging alone for the present. One of the two ventured to tell him so.

“That’s my business!” he answered shortly. His clean-shaven mouth was firmly set.

“I seem to know you?” said an old resident who had joined them.

The sailor just looked steadily at him. If he recognised the other he gave no sign.

“I know no one; and don’t want to!” he replied.

He walked a few paces away and began to dig near an elm tree. He appeared quite unconscious of the little knot of spectators peeping over the hedge. He rested now and then by leaning on his spade; then he would gaze across seawards at the incoming tide. The waves breaking on the round, grey stones, would be thrown back as if dejected; they seemed like him, to make no headway. Yet he knew that the tide was slowly creeping in, and that spurred him on. He knew the sea.

Forty years ago Cleestown was an island with few inhabitants, but now houses had sprung up to meet the needs of the folks employed at the shipyard. There were no inquisitive people then to spy on one’s actions, he muttered, as he went on digging. Now he had been obliged to buy the house as well as the field. He hadn’t reckoned on that when he hid his treasure.

The people, tired of gazing, went on their way; so the old sailor took the can concealed in the hedge, and from his pocket produced a hunk of bread and cheese. And while he munched he watched a liner sail along in the distance.

He sat on the trunk of a fallen tree, and his mind went back to the past—to foreign parts. He didn’t know why his ship landed at that forsaken place? He had gone with the rest to have a look through the caves and, stopping to re-fill his pipe from the tobacco left in a small tin, missed the turning.

It was the empty rum bottle on the path that

## A Queer Old Fish

attracted him first; then what had tempted him to pick up that bit of sail-cloth and unfold it? With what agitation he had staggered out into the sunlight and placed the pearl on the hot sand, the better to admire it! It had looked like a frozen bubble. With what speed he put it into the empty tobacco tin when he heard the voice of the others! A sailor who had picked up the empty bottle put his excited state down to drink. But he said nothing. Then they left the island.

By and by a voice roused him from his day-dream. He woke with a start of fear. Some one was shouting something about treasure hidden in a field. He rose. There he saw a man on the other side of the hedge, on the waste ground to the right, with a crowd around him. He spoke with a queer intake of the breath, as if he had run very far and very fast, to say something of importance before it was too late. So it seemed to the old sailor.

"God is the Treasure that is hidden, and when we find Him—the joy! The unspeakable joy! It is the reaching out towards the light that is the birth of the soul——"

"Reach out towards the light the pearl from the soil! Ah!" muttered the sailor, who was rather hard of hearing. Then the repetition of the words "hidden treasure" roused him to act.

"We must trust where we cannot see," went on the preacher; thus convincing old Jack Tar that this stranger was after his treasure. Hadn't he been trusting where he couldn't see all the morning?

People in the crowd smiled at one another as they made way for the sailor to get near the preacher.

"What do you know about this treasure?" he asked. "What do you know about it? Come to my house and we'll talk it out?"

"I will, my good man," the preacher replied. "I'll come in ten minutes—five, if you like?"

"No. To-morrow! To-morrow morning. Say nothing more about it now; but come to-morrow at ten!"

Thinking the old man was crazy, the preacher humoured him, and the meeting broke up. The sailor went back to his digging. A younger man would have finished hours ago, in spite of



He appeared quite unconscious of the little knot of spectators



## A Queer Old Fish

the fact that the ground was very hard. He looked harrassed and deadly pale, but there was a firmness about his lips which showed that he would stand no interference.

There was no one to spy on his movements now. His pipe was between his teeth; he smoked hard at it to stay the pangs of hunger, for he could not bear to leave the spot. He stopped to knock the ashes out of his blackened pipe against the trunk of the elm tree. Then, having no more tobacco, he put the pipe in his pocket.

A star or two twinkled here and there, and a thin cloud drifted slowly across the moon. He knew it must be close on eleven o'clock. The very time he had hidden it forty years ago, at the end of his second voyage. In

those days the road outside his door was a grassy footpath and the house wasn't built. He could not have imagined a safer place!

When he was well-nigh spent, the spade struck a piece of metal. He dropped the heavy tool, knelt down and put both hands into the hole. His firm mouth twitched as he grasped the box. Then, cupped in the palm of his hand was the gleaming pearl. He could have shouted for joy.

He rose, and staggered towards the house, for he could not take his eyes from his trembling, cupped hand. The pearl seemed to be dancing on his brain, and the hot desire to gaze his fill surged over him.

Though late, he built up a fire. He wondered now how he came to think that his hiding-place had been discovered. He had been so careful that night. True; he had not meant to stay away so long. But that had not been his fault. He had had to go where he was sent.

Now, what had made him think that his treasure had been discovered? The firelight flickered as far as the sea-chest under the window. And as he watched a smile of understanding crept over his face: "That man was a preacher, of course!" he muttered. He went across to the sea-chest, opened it and brought forth a Bible. On the front page was written: "For John, from mother."

His eyes scanned as if for the first time the lines: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and buyeth that field" (see Matt. xiii. 44). He turned to the page, and there was the imprint of his own greasy little thumb when a child! He recalled his mother's gentle reproach: "Johnnie! Look what you've done!"

"Mother!" he murmured, and a blissful smile flitted over the old worn face.

Precisely at ten the following morning there was a tap at the open door.

"Come in, sir! Come in!" and a tender smile played about old John's lips.

The preacher glanced around the room in astonishment. It was bare,

with the exception of a deal table in the centre, and a wooden armchair at the end near the door. At the other end was the sea-chest which had been moved from the wall to form a second seat. His eyes lit up as he caught sight of the Bible; he was about to make his way towards it when John exclaimed:

"Nay, sir! I'll sit on the sea-chest. You sit here! I bought this chair cheap wi' the table from the folks that's left. Sit beside the rum bottle and help yourself to it—I prefer water myself."

The preacher smiled and shook his head at sight of the rum. He moved it nearer the centre of the table, to indicate that it had no attraction for him. The old man was not nicknamed "the queer old fish" without cause, he thought.

John shut the door and sat on the sea-chest. Behind him was the open window which gave a fine view of the sea.

"I've a deal to say!" said John, taking a tobacco tin from his pocket and placing it on the Bible. And for the first time the preacher noticed a change in the tone of his host, a gentleness that had been lacking the previous day. "Yes! I've a deal to say, though not in the way I meant yesterday. But help yourself first to the rum."

"I never drink rum, my friend," the preacher

### A BIRD-MESSAGE

He may have been a robin or he may have been a lark,  
He may have been a linnet or a tit.  
I'm really rather stupid, and the lane was very dark,  
And though I tried I couldn't see a bit!  
I've little nature-knowledge, and you'll laugh at me, no doubt,  
Because I seem so ignorant and dense;  
But if you will be patient and will only hear me out,  
I'll tell you what that bird said on the fence.

He said the world was beautiful and everything was fine  
(I'd just been grumbling coming up that lane);  
He said that life was glorious—a gift of the Divine—  
He bade me buckle courage on again.  
He said, tho' he was singing in the shadowland of night,  
To-morrow he would welcome in the day.  
He said the mist of doubt would clear, and hope shine  
fair and bright:  
And then he said, "Cheer Up!" and flew away.

LILIAN GARD

## A Queer Old Fish

replied. "The drinking of rum when he was very thirsty was the cause of my father losing a valuable pearl. He always thought he'd dragged the pearl out of his pocket with a rum bottle, which was a rather tight fit. It was at an island somewhere in the Pacific—a lonely place of grey caves and red sands."

A pleased smile crossed John's face.

"He never got over the loss of that pearl. It was given him by a man in the pearl fisheries. He said, just the night before he died, that if ever I happened to be that way and found it I could use it for my missionary work. But that can't interest you," he smiled. "It was the sight of rum——"

"I've got it, sir; I've got that pearl!" interrupted John, tapping the top of the tobacco tin, "and God be praised that I can give it to the owner. But I'll begin at the very beginning."

The preacher, more than ever convinced that the man was crazy, leaned back wearily in the chair. He had hoped to have a good earnest talk with the sailor.

But old John had begun—of how he had lived alone with his mother at Cleestown fifty years ago, in a cottage that had since been pulled down. He spoke of his mother's death, and of when he went to sea. The preacher started when he spoke of finding the pearl in the cave,

but he did not interrupt. The old man went on with his story, dwelling more on the wonderful discovery of the Kingdom of Heaven than of the finding of the pearl the previous night.

His voice sank to a whisper, and he leaned across the table:

"To think that in this bare room such glory should have come to me? The meaning of that parable!"

There was a moment's prayerful silence; then—

"Here's your pearl, sir," he said, "on that same bit o' sail-cloth." He opened the tin. "Nay, sir," he repeated, as the preacher hesitated. "You are young—you can travel to foreign parts and spread the Gospel. My work lies here! I've wasted the greater part of my life in dwelling on material things, but I want now to spend the rest in dwelling on spiritual things. It was made quite clear to me in the night," he added softly. "It's just the work of Providence that we should meet, and you have your pearl." So the preacher took it, and with a warm clasp of the hand bade the sailor farewell, and God's blessing on his work.

John spent a few happy years as a local preacher. His favourite text was the parable of the hidden treasure, and when he spoke on it he earnestly related the story of his own life.

## The Choice

I SAID: "O Lord, this is the way;  
It is so broad and smooth and fair:  
The sun shines brightly all the day  
And music fills the scented air.

"There are no stones to wound or bruise,  
No briars to scratch, no thorns to tear;  
It winds and winds, a pleasant road.  
I pray Thee, let my way lie there.

"The other way is narrow, Lord,  
There is no shelter from the heat,  
No fresh'ning breeze, no song of bird,  
And sharp the stones for tired feet."

Still, by my side, the Master stood,  
And sweetly, tenderly, He smiled.  
Almost I heard His gentle voice  
In pleading pity, "O my child!"

I turned from Him, and down the road  
So broad and wonderfully bright  
I hastened on my eager way,  
With anxious feet and heart alight.

But soon I found the music stilled,  
The breeze had gone, the sun grown dim,  
And I was on the road alone,  
For I had turned away from Him.

Back to the parting ways I went,  
Along the road that once seemed fair,  
My heart upon one purpose bent:  
To find the Master waiting there.

And when I felt His presence near,  
The narrow way seemed fair and wide;  
And paved with peace, and filled with song,  
Since I was walking by His side.



# No. 69, Duke Street

By ELSIE E. PHILLIPS

MRS. Dickie, the occupier of 69, Duke Street, was vigorously scrubbing her window-sills, and humming various hymn tunes at the same time. She had already cleaned the steps, polished the letter-box, and swept away all the dead leaves which the swift autumn gales had blown into her small front garden. Pausing to rub a further supply of soap on her brush, she saw a tall and rather handsome gentleman passing along the other side of the street. Mrs. Dickie did not know who he was, but she knew by his dress that he was a clergyman. At the sight of him her thoughts were diverted into other channels, and, as she continued scrubbing as strenuously as ever, her mind was as active as her brush.

"My! Musn't it be grand to be a parson and stand in a pulpit and preach a sermon to lots of people? How glorious it must be to be used by the Lord to touch the hearts of big sinners, like Ben Jakes, for instance. Oh, I wish I were a parson, or one of them lady workers as goes about doing good!" she said to herself.

Picking up her pail she entered the small passage. Having thoroughly cleaned the outside of the house, she proceeded to clean the inside, and, as she worked, she was building many castles in the air of all the things she wanted to do for God.

"The days are going by so quickly, and I don't seem to find time to do anything for Him; and He has done so much for me," she sighed.

After having served dinner and sent the children to school, she sat down for a few minutes to read her Bible, and, as he read, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," she felt a sudden sense of shame and guilt.

"Why, goodness me, here am I nigh forty years old and not a word have I ever preached to any one about my Lord, except, of course, the Bible stories I've told the children!" she exclaimed. She closed the Bible meditatively. "I don't seem to have time to do anything for Him," she murmured, "and I'd love to do something really great."

That night, as she busied herself putting the children to bed and preparing her husband's

tea, she was turning over in her own mind what she could do for her Master, for Jesus Christ had long ago claimed the heart of this faithful soul, and true love always longs to show itself by doing something. Realising that her time was too fully occupied to serve, she thought the difficulty might be solved by occasionally sending a little dinner to some poor neighbour, but her family was large and her purse slender, so it was as much as she could manage to supply all their needs. There was only one thing to do, and that was to "take it to the Lord in prayer."

She prayed in language which knows no eloquence of speech, but true eloquence of heart: "Dear Lord, I'm just longing to do something big and grand for You, but I ain't got time, for there's Tom, Mary, Billy, and baby to look after, besides my husband and the home."

Mrs. Dickie knew what it was to have the Saviour's presence with her daily, for she walked and talked with Him in spirit the whole day long. Sunday, therefore, was a real day of joy to her, and she was particularly looking forward to the coming Sunday, for special Anniversary Services were to be held at the small Mission Hall, which she attended so regularly. All the Dickie family were loyal supporters of the Mission Hall, and took a keen interest in all its concerns.

Mrs. Dickie little knew that the tall man who passed her house whilst she was busy scrubbing the window-sills was to be the evening preacher at the Anniversary Services, and the Rev. Sidney Austin had scarcely hoped to find a message for the congregation amidst the squalor of Duke Street.

Three days previous to this particular Sunday he had sat in his study turning over papers and referring to various books for fresh thoughts and ideas, when he was seized with an unutterable weariness. He had touched on this theme and that theme, but did not feel led to discourse on any one of them. "I want to preach something really helpful," he thought; then, looking at his watch, he took up his hat and went to attend a committee meeting.

When at last Sunday evening arrived, he went forth with the notes of a sermon he had

## No. 69, Duke Street

previously preached, feeling strangely dissatisfied within himself, and doubting whether the message was the right one to give.

Not knowing exactly where the Hall was, he found himself in a maze of squalid streets, where swarms of children thrived in doubtful surroundings. Inquiring of a small boy the nearest way to the Mission Hall, he was told to turn down Duke Street, and that would lead him straight to it. Following the instructions given, he soon found himself in Duke Street, and what a street it was! Occasionally a street door would open as he passed, and whiffs of air, reeking with dirt, beer and tobacco, would greet him. Women stood at doorways clad in dirty rags, with dishevelled hair and evil faces; men loitered in groups, smoking and waiting for the public-houses to open; while little children and wee babies played in the gutter.

As he was in plenty of time for the service he strolled very slowly along Duke Street, feeling somewhat despondent. All at once he stopped short, for there, standing as a jewel in a dust heap, was one little house—No. 69—looking so neat and so spotlessly clean. The window-sills were white with the effects of soap and water, and the letter-box, oh, how it shone! Clean curtains also hung at the windows in dainty folds, and a pretty red geranium graced the centre table at the sitting-room window.

“How very beautiful!” he thought; “whoever can live here?”

He passed on, but still the vision of that spotlessly clean house flashed across his mind.

“O God,” he exclaimed, “if I had only done my best all through, how I might have been used by Thee to save many poor lost souls!”

As he continued his walk he felt conscious of duties neglected and work not well done, and he realised now, as never before, why his work for God had not been successful. He felt utterly ashamed of himself and unworthy of the trust God had placed in him. Whilst he silently prayed for forgiveness he vowed, that henceforth, with God’s help, he would work with all his heart and soul to uplift fallen humanity and win them for Christ.

The little hall was crowded, and the people sang heartily. The speaker fingered his notes nervously. The message, which he had intended to deliver, seemed to convey nothing to

him now; moreover, he felt it was not suitable for that congregation. The vision of No. 69, Duke Street, was still vividly before him, standing like a monument of beauty in an evil world. Seeking for guidance from above, he laid aside his notes and commenced to tell quite simply the story of the love of Jesus.

At that moment there was a slight disturbance at the back of the hall, and those who turned round out of curiosity to see what was the matter beheld, to their utmost surprise, none other than Ben Jakes himself, whose mates, it appeared, had dared him, as a wager, to go in and create a disturbance.

The preacher continued with his address, and it was soon evident that the Spirit of God was speaking through His servant. He explained to the people very simply the message of the Cross, and how Christ died to redeem men. He told them how the great and powerful love of God raises men up from the depths of sin and iniquity, completely transforms them, and makes them men of pure and noble characters, true men of God. He gave many touching illustrations of this wonderful change which has been wrought in the lives of men and women, and he concluded with the Saviour’s loving appeal, “Come unto Me.”

After he had finished there was a silence that could be felt; that great appeal of love had sunk deep into many hearts. The minister asked all to bow their heads in prayer, and, as he prayed earnestly for an ingathering of souls, a broken sob was heard at the back of the hall. It came from Ben Jakes, for light had dawned upon that darkened mind. Ben Jakes had been led to the Cross and had seen his Saviour bearing his sins, yes, his awful sins, on the Cross in his stead.

The service was followed by a Prayer and Thanksgiving Meeting, and it was then that the minister told of how the message had been given to him for that night. He told of the inspiration received from No. 69, Duke Street; how that clean, sweet little house, built exactly the same as all the others, yet standing out so surprisingly, had made him realise more fully what Jesus Christ can do in our lives; how He can make them pure and sweet, and helpful to those around us.

And, as the speaker made his way home, he repeated many times to himself, “God bless No. 69, Duke Street.”



# Faithful Unto Death

**H**E was only a little Mohammedan boy, without father or mother, but the missionary who kept the orphanage school at Sihan was glad to welcome him as a pupil.

And Harnam was eager to learn. He wanted above all to be able to speak English fluently, and being also fond of games, he soon settled down with the other boys.

Harnam had been taught that "there is no God but one, and Mohammed is His prophet." He had been told that Mohammed took the place of the Lord Jesus, and his book, the Koran, took the place of the New Testament. But now the boy learned that the Lord Jesus loved him, and had died for him, that *He* indeed was the Son of God, and his heart opened to receive the message.

Those were happy days, but alas! they were soon to come to an end.

Harnam had an elder brother, a strict Mohammedan, and he was very angry that any one belonging to him should be taught about Christ.

"My brother is only fourteen," he said, "and he must obey me. I shall take him away from your school."

As a matter of fact Harnam's correct age was not known, but the elder brother, in league with a native doctor, sought to prove that he was no older.

The missionaries were so sorry to lose Harnam that the matter was brought before the magistrates, but with regret the judgment had to be given that if the lad had been eighteen he could have pleased himself, but that, as things were, he could only fall in with his brother's wishes.

So the parting came, and the most his old friends could do was to extract a promise from the Mohammedan priest, that Harnam should be sent to a high school and well educated.

But the missionaries did not forget their old pupil, and they prayed earnestly that in new surroundings and among many temptations, he might not forget what he had been taught.

News came from time to time that Harnam was well and happy, and getting on with his studies. And one day the boy visited his old friends, bringing them a present of fruit. How glad they were to see each other, and how much there was to talk about! Little did the missionaries think that they would never see Harnam again!

But the Mohammedans were determined to win Harnam to their faith and make him renounce Christ. At first they tried kindness, gentle persuasion, bribes, but all to no purpose. Then sterner methods were used. The boy was starved, drugged, beaten, threatened, and day by day the question was put to him—"Will you give up Christ and accept Mohammed?" And each time, though faint, bruised and hungry, Harnam would give the answer: "The Lord Jesus has died for me. He loves me, and I love Him. Can I give Him up?"

I wonder how we should have stood such a test! Do we not sometimes find it hard to acknowledge Christ even in our comfortable homes, or among our schoolfellows? Yet this little Indian boy remained faithful, though his persecutors became more and more cruel as time went on.

At last came a day when once more Harnam was asked the old question. He knew by the cold and angry faces around him that these men would go to any length to make him yield. And yet—

"I love Him—I will love Him always—Jesus—I belong to Thee—keep me, oh! keep me. I will never deny Thee."

## Faithful Unto Death

Dark eyes flashed angrily, and suddenly an arm was raised, a blow was struck, and Harnam lay on the ground!

"He is dead," said some. But no! the boy was speaking. It was only a whisper, but those near could just catch the words, "Yishu Masih!—Yishu Masih!—Jesus—Jesus! ———"

And then Harnam finally went away from his cruel persecutors, away from all pain and sorrow, to dwell with the Saviour he so much loved; to be forever with the Lord Jesus Who has promised "a crown of life" to those who are "faithful unto death."

MARY ALISON

## Four Little Travellers

**H**OW would you like to live and sleep in a caravan?

I fancy I can hear some boy or girl say: "I should like it very much indeed. It must be jolly to live in a house on wheels and travel from one place to another, visiting the Fairs all over the country."

Well that is just the kind of life these four little travellers lead, and while it is not always so jolly as it seems, yet on the whole they live healthy and happy lives, and certainly are much better off than many slum children I know.

We are just teaching them to sing, and at first, like other boys and girls, they were a little shy. Very soon, however, a crowd of others gathered around, and presently they were all singing heartily

"Just the same. Just the same.  
God is just the same to-day."

I then taught them the prayer my mother taught me, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." One boy earned a penny for learning to say this prayer, and promised really to ask God to give him this new heart and right spirit.

Then they listened as my friends told them in word and song about Jesus, the unchanging Saviour, Who is always the same—the one of whom we sing—

"He died that we might be forgiven,  
He died to make us good,  
That we might go at last to heav'n,  
Saved by His precious blood."

And so we tried to sow good seed.

WALTER J. PRENTICE





## Margaret's Leading

"**M**RS. JONES will turn me out if I cannot pay her the rent, and what will become of me then? God has work for me here, or He would not have brought me into the world; but I cannot seem to find it. Isn't there any place for me where I can earn an honest living?"

These words were uttered by Margaret Taylor, as she lay on the hard uncomfortable bed in a tiny little room she occupied on the top floor of Mrs. Jones' house. She sobbed as if her heart would break for fear she might not be able to keep even this lodging much longer.

Across the road Miss Day, the dress-maker, was singing away sitting by her open window. She felt happy because she had quite a lot of work to do.

"Cast all thy care, and not a part,  
The great things and the small;  
The Lord's all-loving, mighty heart  
Has room and thought for all."

Over and over again these words rang in Margaret's ears. Suddenly she got up and knelt down by the bedside. "Dear Lord," she prayed, "I have tried hard to get honest work where I can be good, but so far I have failed. Please help me to find it. Thou knowest I have no dear ones to help me."

\* \* \* \*

Then she bathed her face, and dressed to go out. "I am trusting Thee to lead me, dear Lord," she prayed to herself as she went down the long flight of stairs. As she passed the sitting-room door Mrs. Jones spoke to her: "Are you going by Evans'?" she asked. "I want a little more material like this to finish Mary's dress, and I shall be so much obliged if you can get it."

So Margaret, with pattern in hand, started off, did her errand, and came out of the shop.

Now she stood irresolutely, wondering what she should do next, and which way she would go.

Just then a little middle-aged woman came along, stepping so briskly that she failed to see a bit of banana skin, and slipped on it and fell. Margaret sprang at once to help her. "Have you hurt yourself much?" she asked.

The little woman tried to pick herself up, but sank back in pain. "It is my ankle," she said; "I have either broken or sprained it, and what can I do?"

"There's a doctor near by; hadn't I better help you in there?"

\* \* \* \*

"A bad sprain," was the doctor's verdict. "You will not be able to use that foot much for some time."

"Dear me," she said to Margaret, the tears running down her cheeks; "what *can* I do? I live in a little cottage five miles away from the town, quite alone. Now who will take care of my birds, and my garden—and me?"

Suddenly the little woman stopped her cries of grief, for Margaret's face beamed with happiness.

"The Lord did hear my prayer, and lead me. I'm sure of *that*, and I'll never doubt again!" she cried. "I am all alone too, so will you let me wait on you, and do for you? I can work ever so hard; I should love to for *you*, and I promise I would do my very best."

"You dear, dear child, the Lord has led us both! We will get home as quickly as possible, and adopt each other." The little woman lifted her heart in prayer and thankfulness.

L. M. C.



# LIGHT IN THE HOME

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A Village Character

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# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village  
by Amos E. Denner

## Job Strong's Awakening

A CURIOUS thing about life in a great city is the large number of solitary, friendless people. From the standpoint of social privileges, they might just as well be dwelling on a desert island.

But, other things being equal, there is something delightfully friendly and clannish about life in the country that more than compensates the dwellers far removed from the world of up-to-date, bustling activity.

If, however, it be painful to be isolated, through no fault of one's own, in a great city, it is even doubly so in the quiet country-side. But when, as in the case of Job Strong, that isolation is the fault of the individual himself, life becomes almost unbearable.

All the world hates a mean man, and Moortor was no exception to this rule. In Job Strong, the villagers had an example of selfishness that seemed to flourish like the moorland heather in its native soil. And the pity of it all was that the man's general meanness seemed to be accompanied by a fervid profession of religion that taxed the forbearance of even the most charitable minded in Moortor. Thus, it has to be set out that Job Strong's latest and shabbiest trick in trying to oust poor old Peter Johnson from his little home, all for the sake of gaining a few paltry shillings, had brought the

man to the position of an outcast in the eyes of Moortor folk.

Maybe it is not wise to go too much into details, but just to let it suffice to say that as the children trooped out of school on the afternoon following the attempted eviction, Job Strong's home was burnt to the ground!

Usually, in case of emergency, Moortor folk turned out to a man to help a neighbour, but in this instance nothing of the sort happened. The place was allowed to burn at will; all of which goes to prove that if the devil had not undisputed sway in the village, his power was, nevertheless, very great.

Probably, for various reasons, the incident of the fire would never have been recorded, were it not for the fact that at the very moment the devouring flames were, all unknown to Job Strong, completing their fell work, the man himself was plunging into the river and rescuing Ned Payne's children from a watery grave.

The tragic irony of it all!

\* \* \* \*

Troubles are said never to come alone; this probably also applies to surprises. When troubles and surprises combine forces, however, then the effect is inclined to be somewhat overwhelming, especially in a quiet place like Moortor.

It was James Grice, back from his post-round, who pulled Job Strong out of the water. Quickly he summoned aid, and it must be confessed that at sight of the limp helpless body lying on the river bank, the villagers found their feelings to be a strange mixture of sympathy and indifference.

Artificial respiration was only moderately successful, and after much laborious effort in this direction a hurdle was brought for the

## Moortor Folk

purpose of carrying the man where he could receive proper attention and care.

But when the question arose as to where Job Strong should be actually taken, more than one sturdy inhabitant of Moortor was conscious of an inward qualm at the thought of the man's home now reduced to a mass of smouldering ruins. It was with feelings of relief that the villagers at that moment observed Granny Whitlock toddling towards them. Quickly the old soul took in the general position, and just as quickly took action.

"If there's no other place, then just carry him along to 'Sunny View,'" she said, after getting some of the men to raise the sufferer's head instead of lowering it as they had mistakenly done. "Let Job Strong be what he will," she continued, "'twas a plucky deed of his to save those bairns. 'Tis a mortal bad thing that he'll wake up to when he finds his home burnt to the ground. . . . I hope that fire was a real 'accident' and not the work of any thoughtless noodle about here. . . . Lift the man gently, neighbours, he's beaten and out. . . . Here you!—Ned Payne—don't stand there scratching your head—splinters are bad, especially under finger nails. Cut away home, and see to those children. I'll send up a couple of thick rough towels; give the little folk ten minutes' hard rubbing, and tuck them off to bed. . . . And you—James Grice—jump on your bicycle, and ride hard for the doctor. You'll do the four miles like an engine, even

though you're not exactly a youngster now. It's all down hill. Tell the doctor to bring along something with him. He'll have a stiff job of it with Job Strong by the look of things. Give me another coat, somebody, for the man's head. That's it! Now march!"

And slowly Job Strong was borne to "Sunny View."

\* \* \* \*

Old Granny Whitlock's place of abode looked sweetly attractive, standing in its garden ablaze with roses and pinks.

Some stately irises, in their delicate and varied robes, swayed gently in the light breeze; in a corner, great crimson and white peonies gave a superb show of heavy colour, whilst, near by, some fine healthy stocks not only gave pleasure to the eye, but also filled the air with their sweet smell.

Bees moved droningly from flower to flower, and from a pear tree that stood at the end of the garden, a couple of thrushes vied with each other in gladsome song, just as the little procession bearing the water-soaked body of Job Strong reached the old lady's haven of peace.

Once inside the place, the half-conscious man was quickly made as comfortable as possible, and half an hour later the doctor arrived.



It was James Grice, back from his post-round, who pulled Job Strong out of the water



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After a speedy examination of his patient, the medical man shook his head.

"If Mr. Strong were twenty years younger, it wouldn't be so serious," said the doctor, in answer to Granny Whitlock's inquiry as to his opinion of the unfortunate man's condition, "but as things are, I'm afraid that his heart cannot stand the shock. He'll probably remain in a more or less comatose condition for a few days, and then sink away. You'd better get a neighbour to come in and stay with you, Mrs. Whitlock."

\* \* \* \*

It was nearly a week before Granny Whitlock dared to break the disturbing news of the fire to Job Strong. And when he heard it, the effect upon the man was most serious, and seemed to give the final blow to any hope of recovery.

"The trouble is a peculiar one associated with the heart valves," said the doctor, in response to Granny Whitlock's anxious inquiry as to whether anything further could be done for the patient. "It's undoubtedly a case for a Harley Street specialist. . . . Even then, I am not at all sure. . . . There is, however, just half a chance, but of course, the physician's fee—not less than fifty guineas—puts the matter out of thought, especially as I understand the man has lost so heavily over his recent disaster."

But if the old lady said little at this point, it was because she was doing some hard thinking. She did, however, manage to convey to the doctor an impression that the last word had not been said about the matter.

A little later who should be seen coming up the garden path but Peter Johnson. The old man had made several calls of inquiry during the week, and as he now toddled along, Granny Whitlock noticed that he had a bunch of his choicest roses intermixed with several sprays of his beloved "lad's love" in his hand.

"I thought, maybe, the sight of the flowers and the 'lad's love' would do Mr. Strong good," said the old fellow simply, "specially the 'lad's love.' He seemed rather keen on it the other day."

There was no mistaking the message of goodwill. The gift of the flowers may have been, in itself, a very simple thing, but it surely spoke of a heart in which no vestige of hard feeling or revolt could find a home. And the kingdom of God is enriched, and more fully established, by such simple acts of those who have come to know the saving grace and precious love of the Saviour.

"Come right in, Peter," said old Granny

Whitlock. "I'm glad you've called to-day. There's something particular I want to speak to you about. . . . But, first of all, take those flowers right upstairs to Job Strong yourself. . . . Don't try to talk much with him, he can't stand it."

How literally Peter Johnson carried out these instructions may be better understood if it be recorded that the old man, upon entering the sick room, bent over and placed the flowers in the hand of the invalid without a word. Job Strong gave a slight indication of recognition to his old tenant. Then raising the flowers to his face, as if the better to inhale their sweet perfume, he suddenly burst into a flood of weeping. After that he clasped old Peter Johnson's hand in his own. Not a word was spoken by either of the men, and when Peter Johnson saw that Job Strong was again relapsing into his usual comatose condition, he carefully unwound the fingers of the sick man from his own, and quietly withdrew.

"Now, remember to do exactly as I have told you," was Granny Whitlock's injunction, as Peter Johnson left "Sunny View" some time later; and from the old man's demeanour it was to be judged that whatever may have been his instructions, they would be most faithfully observed.

\* \* \* \*

In the well-appointed home of a great London physician, some six weeks after the above-mentioned events, the great man seemed to extract considerable pleasure from a letter which he was then reading.

Another letter lay unopened on his desk, but all interest was centred on the one before him.

Just then a lady entered the room, bearing in her arms a box of fragrance, and at sight of the sweet old-fashioned pinks and stocks and roses, together with generous sprays of southernwood, the doctor exclaimed:

"That's the best of having a good wife, and happening to say so, especially to country people. Evidently, Moortor folk have been buying plenty of postage stamps lately." Then pausing for a moment to take in the rustic sweet beauty of the delightful flowers, he went on: "This letter is from our old friend Mr. Job Strong. He is evidently very grateful that I was able to pull him through. . . . I should think he must be a religious sort of man. . . . Says something about an awakening, and being ashamed of his past, and that he intends 'ringing true' in the future. . . . Actually dares

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to express the hope that he'll meet me in heaven too, and — — My word! I should think the local doctor gets some funny cases."

"That's another Moortor letter, isn't it?" broke in the lady, indicating the unopened envelope. "Do see what it says. It's so interesting to hear from these country people."

"From that old soul I told you about—Granny Whitlock they call her," said the doctor

after opening the letter. "Hullo! . . . This goes back by return of post. . . . No fees from such a sweet old saint as that. . . . But I don't think I should have gone to Moortor, if it hadn't been for that dear old 'lad's love' man she sent here to fetch me. . . . Take care of those flowers, dear; Peter Johnson grows them so well. . . . Moortor folk are just wonderful."

## The Barringtons' Baby

IT was a most fortunate thing for the baby that it was strong and healthy, or else it could never have survived the care that its anxious young father and mother lavished upon it. Times without number they woke it up to be sure it was alive. Then, when it howled lustily, they sent for the doctor in case something might be the matter with it; they were not sure what, but just vaguely something. As they were club patients, this naturally displeased the doctor, and when Joe Barrington knocked him up at two o'clock one morning with an urgent request to come at once he asked testily what was the matter.

"The baby has screamed for an hour without stopping," said poor Joe, "and we think it may be in pain."

"Then——" and the doctor mildly suggested homely remedies.

"But he mayn't need them," urged Joe.

"In that case, don't give them," smiled the doctor.

"But he may need them. We want you to come and see."

"I'm bothered if I will."

The doctor banged down the window, and Joe went home downcast. His eager ear listened for sounds of infantile squalls as he neared the cottage, but all was silent. He hurried to the door and entered noiselessly, and was met by his wife, who inquired in an anxious voice if the doctor was coming. Joe shook his head despondently.

"He won't."

"Oh, he must," cried the anxious mother.

"But he's not screaming now." Joe was relieved.

"No; that's just what worries me. He stopped quite suddenly, and went straight off to sleep."

"Perhaps he had tired himself out," suggested Joe.

"No, it was too sudden for that." The little mother had tears in her eyes. "He just was in the middle of a terrible scream, and he'd straightened himself stiff; you know the way he does."

Joe nodded, he knew only too well.

"And then he just gave a little sigh, and went straight to sleep."

"Did you wake him to see if he was all right?"

"I looked at his tongue, and opened his eyes, but he did not stir, and his pulse is terribly fast."

"Let's have a look at him," said Joe uneasily; and together they went in on tip-toe and viewed the fat, sleeping child.

"He gives queer gasps in his sleep," said the anxious mother.

"And one cheek is redder than the other," put in the fully-as-anxious father.

"Look at the way he has drawn up his legs; does that mean he is in pain?" the mother's voice was tense with worry. "What I am worrying about so is the way he stopped crying so suddenly. It may mean that something snapped inside."

"But, surely he'd bleed at the mouth if that had happened." Joe was miserably frightened.

"He might not. Old Mrs. Jenks told me only yesterday how her niece lost a beautiful child just through his screaming. He broke some internal organ, and they never knew, and the poor little thing just faded away before their very eyes. I was thinking ought we to wake baby and see if he can cry."

"Wouldn't it do to wait a bit till he gets hungry?" Joe was anxious, but he was also very sleepy. "Perhaps he needs the sleep," he added. "Yelling like he did would tire any one."

"Then I think I'll sit beside him till he wakes." The worried little mother had in her



## The Barringtons' Baby

mind all kinds of stories related to her by thoughtful neighbours, in which infants died in their sleep, or through lack of watchfulness choked and nearly suffocated.

"If you sit up, I'll sit up, too," said Joe, manfully.

But the frightened little mother was too sensible to allow that. What was the use of their both being tired out? she argued. Far better for Joe to sleep, and then if baby were going to be really ill—her voice quavered—he would be more fit to see to things next day. "I'll call you the minute I get really—really frightened," she assured him.

Joe leant over the sleeping baby. "I think he looks all right," he said. He caught one small hand in his, and felt for a pulse in a wrist imbedded in fat. "His pulse is not so feverish," he said reassuringly. Then he went to bed, and slept heavily. He was awakened next morning by a fierce knocking at the door, and jumped out of bed with a confirmed idea that baby was very ill, and that he must go for the doctor immediately.

Then he heard his wife's voice, welcoming some one effusively, and realised that it was Mrs. Jenks from over the way.

"I heard your gate bang twice last night," she said, "and I said to Jenks, there's that poor Barrington off for the doctor; I knew they would have trouble with that baby when I saw him in the afternoon. He was breathing in a funny kind of way—just the way poor Martha's baby used to breathe before he died in convulsions, so I came right over before I even lit the fire to see if I could do anything."



Joe leant over the sleeping baby. "I think he looks all right," he said

Joe hurriedly dressed himself. He did not like Mrs. Jenks; he knew that her coming meant that she would breakfast with them; and that, instead of helping his wife, she would hinder her. When he came out the baby was in his cot by the fire, gurgling with laughter, while Mrs. Jenks poked him in the ribs, and said "Diddum then."

Mrs. Jenks stayed to breakfast, as Joe had expected she would, and, as usual, her conversation turned on the ailments common and uncommon to infants. Her sister, who had buried six, was called to memory more often than was cheerful.

"There was the eldest now," said Mrs. Jenks, scraping egg from her plate with a noisy knife. "He was just such another as little baby there. Fine, healthy child, never ailing; and I mind well, it was a Monday, because we settled to wash the front room curtains—nice Nottingham lace, with true-lover's knots and angels in the

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design— and my sister, she had the child on her lap, and what he got hold of off the table we never could tell to this day; no, not if we was burnt at the stake for it; but before dinner time he was in convulsions, and that very night I was choosing which robe we'd have for the burying, my sister having hysterics on the sofa, and saying, 'Could he have eaten a bit of bacon rind, or swallowed the stopper of the Worcester sauce bottle?' Thanks, if you can spare it—not that I often eat two eggs at a sitting. That's what I always say to a young mother—you can't be too careful, and so I popped over right away, not even laying Jenks's breakfast; but he'll know I stopped to give you a hand."

That afternoon the doctor was called out to see a patient living far out of the township. Installed as nurse, he found Mrs. Barrington's mother, and to her, as a sensible woman, he confided some of his troubles regarding the Barrington baby.

Mrs. Blake smiled. "I'll go down next week and have a chat with Mary," she said. "It's a good thing it's a strong child, or I'd be going to its funeral."

Mrs. Blake's visit was a surprise. Mary was darning stockings; Joe sat by the fire smoking; the baby was in his cradle.

After greetings had been exchanged, Mrs. Blake looked at the baby and sighed. "I'm always sorry for the first baby," she said.

"Why?" asked Joe.

"Oh, his parents experiment on him, and ill-treat him generally."

"Ill-treat him!" exclaimed Mary.

"Yes, worry the child to death. Why, I've heard of an idiot of a woman who wakes her child up to see if he's all right. Well, I say a woman who'll do that isn't fit to own a baby."

Mary and Joe coloured.

"I'm sure our baby looks well," said Mary.

"Humph!" Mrs. Blake was thoughtful.

"He looks worried, and that's the truth. More than one case I've known of a child growing up bad-tempered and crabby through his having stupid, worrying parents, that dose him and badger him till you feel inclined to shake the pair of them. A healthy child needs air, good food, and sleep, and all the medicines thrown out of the window. You two, perhaps, aren't as silly as most, but for all that I'm sure you make that baby's life a burden to him."

Mary and Joe looked guilty.

"Healthy things want letting alone; not fussing over."

From that day the Barrington baby flourished even more, and the doctor smiled when he met Joe in the street, and inquiring: "Well, how's that sickly youngster of yours, Barrington?" was answered hotly:

"Sickly! He's never had a minute's sickness in his life."

## A Perplexed Teacher

By PERCY LAKE

THERE is no Gentile city that has such heart-stirring associations as Jerusalem has had for the Jew since the time of King David. London has its House of Parliament and St. Paul's Cathedral. Canterbury and York have cathedrals, and attract religious pilgrims. Oxford and Cambridge, with their colleges, are centres of education.

Jerusalem comprehended all these features and others besides.

It was to this city that Jesus came at a time when people from all parts were crowding in to celebrate the Passover.

Arrived at the temple, He found the outer court turned into a veritable market-place, for the purpose of providing animals for sacrifice. He saw the motive behind the market

was selfishness on the part of those who wished to enrich themselves, and that the effect on the worshippers was evil.

Plaiting a whip of rushes He drove out the animals and their owners, protesting as He did so against the desecration of God's House. This remarkable performance and other wonderful signs, of which we have no details, set the city talking about Him. Many people arrived easily at a shallow belief in the Worker of Wonderful Signs, but there was a man of different character who bore a name that signified "Victory among his people."

He belonged to a party that contended for the strict observance of all ordinances they believed to be according to the will of God.

He was a member of the council before which



## A Perplexed Teacher

were tried certain classes of offenders against law and order. He was held in high repute for his learning, and our Lord refers to him as "the teacher of Israel."

Often he sat in the midst of a group of men instructing them in the teaching of older rabbis, and as he passed through the street or market was himself respectfully saluted with that coveted title by the common folk.

Many of his colleagues were quite content with formal religion, and the popularity gained by performing their public duties; but this man was a thinker, and grew so perplexed as he pondered on recent events that he determined to seek a personal interview with the One who was doing such remarkable things in the city where he dwelt.

That the new Teacher came from God, he was already convinced, but to him it seemed passing strange that He spoke a provincial dialect, and did not bear the mark of any of the recognised religious parties of that day. Being a genuine thinker, however, and therefore prepared to welcome light from any quarter, he determined to speak face to face with the One whose teaching and behaviour had perplexed him.

And so "he came to Jesus by night." Much has been said and written about that simple phrase. Usually, it is assumed that he was a coward who dared not come by day; but it may be that his public duties took up the day-time, or that he wanted to discuss his problems at a time when freedom from intruders might be expected.

In any case, let it be remembered that he took great risks as he went alone in the darkness of the night along the unlit streets, infested by robbers and half-wild dogs.

Where he found our Lord we cannot tell. It may have been in the cottage of some humble peasant, or it may be that he had to make his way out of the city gate to the slopes of Olivet, where the moon cast deep shadows of the trees, and the mysterious wind rustled their leaves as it passed on its way, he knew not whence or whither.

Having found the object of his search, Nicodemus opened the conversation with genuine courtesy, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him."

Thus, in a sentence he acknowledged the true dignity of One who lived in humble circum-

stances, and his own responsibility to attend to the message He bore.

In His reply Jesus apparently, but not actually, ignored this statement, and remarked, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The difference between one who is a genuine disciple of the Lord Jesus, and one who is not, is something far deeper than a difference in degree of knowledge and education; it is a difference of nature. To be His disciple involves such a complete change that no amount of teaching, even though it be from God, is sufficient for its accomplishment.

It is not surprising that Nicodemus was staggered by such teaching. He showed true wisdom in asking how these things could be brought about. The important thing to notice in our Lord's well-known answer, is that while spiritual life can only come from God Himself, it is always bestowed in immediate response to faith in the Divine Son Who died for sinners.

This involves a mystery because of our limited knowledge, but ignorance of the origin and nature of life need not prevent us gaining its benefits.

The miller may not know whence and whither the wind blows, but he sets the sails of his mill to catch it as it passes, and so grinds his corn.

We may not know how an unsightly bulb can become a beautiful flower, but we can plant it and watch its development.

The birds of the air know nothing of the chemical constituents of eggs, but obeying God's laws of nature they produce chickens.

So also "Whosoever believeth, may in Him have eternal life."

\* \* \* \*

What immediately resulted from this interview we cannot say. Later, when wicked hands had crucified the Lord of Glory, and His disciples had fled in panic, Nicodemus openly identified himself with the cause of the One thus lifted up. "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

He came to a Teacher, and found a Saviour.

He came in the dark, and emerged into the light.

He came privately, and confessed publicly.

Who can doubt that ere this he had already entered the kingdom of God, whose doors still stand wide open for all who come, relying not alone upon the water of their repentance, but also upon the life-giving power of God Himself?



Christ Cleansing the Temple

[From the picture by Harold Copping]



# "A LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN"

BY ELEANOR CLARE.



"WHEN strawberries are plentiful and cherries are cheap there isn't a shadier nook in the whole of Eccleston than your parlour," exclaimed Miss Bateson, catching sight of Miss Turvey through the open door. Miss Turvey was in the kitchen, and looked very slim and neat in her blue overall. She was wiping her hands on a roller towel.

"Strawberries ought to be plentiful in June, and cheap, too! Come in and let's see what you've got! Just let me put the potatoes on first."

But Miss Bateson was already seated in a big chair, the only chair that would hold her ample figure. She placed her baskets on the rug. The geraniums in the window opposite were in full bloom; the green leaves darkened the room and made it refreshingly cool. Miss Turvey came in and cast a calculating eye on the cherries.

"How much are they?" she asked.

But at that moment little footsteps could be heard across the tiled kitchen, and a child with eyes like forget-me-nots danced excitedly into the room.

"Look!" she exclaimed, drawing attention to an ice-cream cornet she held carefully in a chubby hand.

"Whoever gave you that?" exclaimed her aunt. "Put it away till after dinner. Who gave it you?"

"Mrs. Wivvers did."

Miss Turvey took the cornet and placed it in the hollowed-out head of a china dog which was supposed to do duty as a match-box. Then

she put it on the mantelpiece. Rosie laughed, delighted at the comical appearance.

"Mrs. Withers lives at No. 20, you know," explained Miss Turvey. "She's going to let again. A lady came to see if I could put her up. But I couldn't; so I took her to Mrs. Withers. The young man she's got is leaving at the end of this month. She's lucky to let so soon. That's why she's bought Rosie the cornet, I expect. A way of thanking me, you know, for recommending her. It's made a difference to Eccleston since char-à-bancs have stopped to pick people up for the seaside. But I'm lucky; thanks to Rosie's daddie."

Rosie danced in and out, her little flower-like face peeping round the front door and laughing merrily each time she caught sight of the cornet.

"I can't make Mrs. Withers out—she's never anything to say. Keeps herself to herself, as the saying is," Miss Bateson remarked.

"I can't quite make her out myself. She's one of those women you can't get on with always——"

"She's nice, auntie! She's ever so nice!" interrupted Rosie.

"Just hark at her, bringing in her word!" laughed Miss Bateson.

"I've spoilt her. You see she's lost both parents, and being always with me's made her a bit old for her years. She's only four."

"Mrs. Wivvers is nice, auntie!"

"Run away and play, Rosie, do! Give auntie a kiss, and run away and play." Rosie kissed her aunt and then flung her arm around Miss Bateson's neck and kissed her also. A

## "A Little Bit of Heaven"

moment later she was gone. "Yes! she is nice; a bit reserved, that's all." But Miss Bateson was thinking of the little arm around her neck and the wet impress on her cheek.

"How much are the cherries?" Miss Turvey had to repeat her question.

"Sevenpence," was the reply. Rosie's action had knocked a penny off. "Rosie is a nice little thing. I wish you'd let her come to me for a day or two? I'll bring her back on Thursday with the eggs and butter."

Miss Turvey was so taken back that she forgot even to look at the strawberries. Indeed, Miss Bateson was rather surprised at herself.

"Well, then I could go to the hospital to-morrow to see Becky Martin. When I went last Wednesday Rosie cried to see such a lot of people ill. She's so tender-hearted. You heard what she said about Mrs. Withers? She can't bear to hear me say anything against any one. She's like a little bit of heaven."

"What! A little bit of leaven?" was the somewhat indignant reply.

"I said 'heaven'! not 'leaven.' That's in the Bible," laughed Miss Turvey.

"Both words are in the Bible," Miss Bateson replied. "They come together somewhere." She picked up her baskets. "I'll call for Rosie on my way back, about six o'clock."

Rosie was stroking a black cat on the window-sill when they reached the door.

"Would you like to go back with Miss Bateson, lovey?"

"And sit in the cherry-tree?" added Miss Bateson coaxingly.

Rosie's eyes sparkled, and Miss Bateson was rewarded with another kiss.

As she went on her way she thought of One Who took a little child from the midst of them, and said, "For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." And when she thought of heaven the word "leaven" would come back to her; so she determined to find out just what it meant and where it was, in the Bible.

Miss Turvey had cleared away the tea-things when there was a tap at the kitchen window.

"Come right in, Mrs. Withers," she exclaimed.

"I'm just going to get Rosie ready to go back with Miss Bateson. What do you think Miss Bateson thought I said this morning? She thought I said Rosie was like a little bit of leaven; and I said 'heaven.'"

"Rosie's not unlike a bit of leaven. She's so active!" smiled Mrs. Withers.

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Turvey sharply. It didn't sound a nice thing to say about her darling. "What is leaven, anyway? I know it's in the Bible; but what is it?"

"Why! It's barm! yeast! What you bake bread with, of course. You know the parable: 'The Kingdom of Heaven

is like unto leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures——'"

"One for auntie; one for Mrs. Wivvers; and one for Miss Bateson," interrupted Rosie.

"Hush, Rosie!" said her aunt.

Mrs. Withers glanced quickly at her neighbour, then, after a pause, she said:

"I can't put the lady up after all; that young man isn't going until the middle of July, and she specially wants the rooms from the beginning of the month. So if you hear of any one——"

Miss Turvey did not reply. She was brushing Rosie's hair.

"Does Miss Bateson sell eggs?" asked Mrs. Withers.

"Yes. And you can depend on them being new-laid; but I think she keeps the biggest for herself. Anyway, they're very small what I get from her."

"Good-bye, Rosie!" said Mrs. Withers, bending down to kiss her; their heads were so close together that her white hair mingled with the golden locks of the child.

Mrs. Withers could scarcely have reached home when Miss Bateson came back.

"Mrs. Withers is not taking that lady after all!" was Miss Turvey's greeting. "She said nothing about the five shillings deposit she'd received. I saw the lady put it into her hand myself. I'll not recommend her again."

Miss Bateson nodded understandingly.

"Rosie's ready. You'll just catch that 'bus."

"I'll bring her back on Thursday."

### A MOMENT OF TIME

Each moment is a sacred trust,  
And given us to use for good or ill.  
Each one can make or mar a life,  
And each has its own mission to fulfil.

Each is a gift, a precious gift,  
Bestowed on us from time's unbounded store;  
Each passes by with fleeting wings,  
Its works may linger—it returns no more.

And each of them, did we but heed,  
Brings us this message, this deep earnest plea:  
"Use this to help thy fellow men,  
And fit thine own soul for Eternity."

EUNICE INGILBY



## "A Little Bit of Heaven"

"Mind you do!" laughed Miss Turvey, as she watched them turn the corner.

The following day was a day of cloudless sunshine, and Rosie helped to feed the chickens and watched the hens roosting under a shelter stacked up with old hay. Her blue eyes opened very wide as she gazed at some poppies growing on the top of the old stack. Then she ran to meet Miss Bateson coming along with some eggs.

"You wouldn't keep the biggest eggs for yourself, would you, Miss Bateson?" she asked. "You would sell them just as the hens laid them, wouldn't you?"

"Yes! lovey!" replied Miss Bateson, who in her mind had just been calculating how many big ones could be spared for her own use. But the child had faith in her. She would not destroy that faith.

She put Rosie in the little spare bedroom at the same time as the chickens went to bed, much to Rosie's delight; and then she went into the parlour and searched in the Bible for the word "heaven."

After a long time she found: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees"; but that contradicted what she had in mind. She would look again the next day, she determined.

During the night there was a heavy fall of rain, so Miss Bateson decided to keep Rosie indoors in case she caught cold if she ran about the farm in her thin shoes.

Miss Bateson's kitchen with the great beam across the ceiling and a fitch of bacon hanging in the chimney corner was very cosy, especially when she had the fire alight.

She was baking bread in the afternoon, and had just set it to rise when Mrs. Withers walked up the path.

"You haven't heard of any one who wants apartments, I suppose, have you?" asked Mrs. Withers plaintively. "Letting's all I've got to depend on, being a widow; so I thought, as I want some eggs, I'd ask you that at the same time."

"Come in and sit down. I've some scones in the oven to see to." As Miss Bateson turned the scones she thought of the deposit which had not been returned. "I never know of any one who wants apartments," she said.

"I thought you might hear of some one when you go round with your butter and eggs." Still there was no reply. Rosie, having greeted Mrs. Withers affectionately, went back to the rag doll Miss Bateson had made for her.

"Here comes Miss Turvey!" Miss Bateson



Miss Turvey and Miss Bateson gazed at one another in astonishment

## "A Little Bit of Heaven"

exclaimed in a tone of relief as she saw Miss Turvey pass the window.

"I couldn't do without Rosie any longer; so when I left the hospital, instead of going home I caught the 'bus and came on here. It's dreadful without Rosie; I'd never have thought it!"

"Now sit down. The scones'll soon be done, then we'll have some tea," said Miss Bateson cheerfully.

But there was an uncomfortable silence, except for Rosie's little chattering tongue. They watched her play while Miss Bateson set the table.

"Now! I am Mrs. Wivvers," said the child to her doll, "and you are Rosie. Rosie, dear!" she said, mimicking Mrs Withers' voice. It made the women smile, but the child was unconscious of that. "Rosie, dear!" she went on, holding two large pearl buttons in her hand, "take these two half-crowns and run as quickly as you can to the lady before she's out of sight. Tell her Mrs. Wivvers's sorry she can't keep the rooms as the gentleman isn't going away after all. I couldn't come myself, tell her, because I've got to dish his dinner up."

Miss Turvey and Miss Bateson gazed at one another in astonishment, but Mrs. Withers' eyes were on the rising bread.

"Miss Bateson!" she laughed; "you'll have to see to your bread."

While Miss Bateson attended to the bread

Miss Turvey turned to Mrs. Withers and said:

"My friend is coming out of the hospital next week. Could you put her up for July, so's she can have a good rest before she goes back to service?"

"Certainly!" replied Mrs. Withers. "I was watching the bread while you were listening to Rosie. I was thinking of that parable about the little leaven leavening the whole lump."

"Now, I looked for that in the Bible, but I could only find: 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.'"

"If you'd turned to the page before

that—it's the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew—you'd have seen the parable. I believe our Lord meant to remind us that leaven is *active*," continued Mrs. Withers in a low, earnest voice. "Rosie is the little bit of leaven in our lives. D'you remember when Rosie shouted out: 'One measure for auntie; one for Mrs. Withers——'" Miss Turvey nodded. "Well, it came to my mind then that we were like the three measures, and Rosie was the leaven. It's not the *word* 'leaven,' but what it *does*, that our Lord meant."

Miss Bateson and Miss Turvey stared at one another; the same thought in the minds of both: this was Mrs. Withers talking so openly whom they had thought to be so reserved. And the two who listened felt that what Mrs. Withers said was even truer than she herself knew.

### HER DAILY PRAYER

A work-worn Mother knelt to pray  
At the beginning of the day:—  
"Lord, send Sam boots—a coat to Dick—  
Give Molly health, she's ailing-sick:  
Dear Dad wants work—we're 'out of' wood,  
And coals—and money to buy food!  
We need last week's and this week's rent!"—  
And with her prayer a faith is blent—  
"God's Fatherhood will understand  
The wants of all my little band!"

LILLIAN GARD

## In Your Steps

A FATHER and his tiny son

Crossed a rough street one stormy day.

"See, father," cried the little one,

"I stepped in your steps all the way!"

Ah! random childish hands, that deal

Quick thrusts no coat of proof could stay!

It touched him with the touch of steel—

"I stepped in your steps all the way!"

If this man shirks his manhood's due,

And heeds what lying voices say,

It is not one who falls, but two—

"I stepped in your steps all the way!"

But they who thrust off greed and fear,

Who love and watch, who toil and pray—

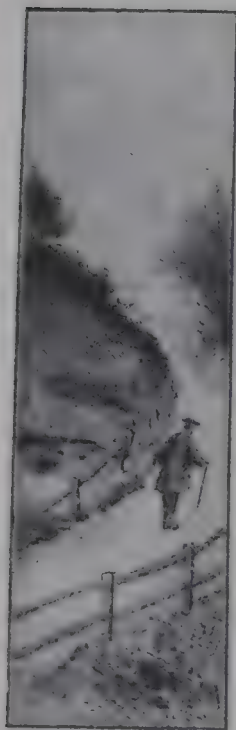
How their hearts gladden when they hear

"I stepped in your steps all the way!"

ROY TEMPLE HOUSE



# David Forester's Quest



DAVID FORESTER stood at the cross-roads at the top of the hill and surveyed the sign-post with a disconsolate air.

"Five miles more!" he murmured, "and I thought I was nearly there!"

Looking round, he felt almost tempted to spend the night in a neighbouring hay-field, for shadows were gathering, and he was very tired. But a soft, fine rain was beginning to fall, and dis-

regarding the desire to rest, David trudged on, for he felt that he must reach the next village that night. Else, he mused, it would mean five miles added to the next day's tramp, and that would never do, for, "I *must* get to Bristol by Thursday," he said aloud.

How many times the traveller had repeated these words during the last few days he hardly knew, but ever since leaving Liverpool they had been his motto. "Bristol—Bristol, by Thursday—please God!"

That morning David Forester had asked for a drink of water at a wayside cottage, and the good-wife had instead made him a cup of tea.

"Going far?" she had said. Then, learning his destination and that he was not in search of work, but going to see "some one," she had nodded and smiled meaningly, and wished the stranger "good luck and a sunny wedding-day," as he passed on!

But David was not seeking happiness, he was in quest of a soul! "If only

she knew," he thought, "that it's *Jennie* I'm going to see; the little sister that used to be the pet of the old country home, the spoilt, pretty, self-willed little sister of the old days, who now——"

But he must press on, such thoughts would hinder his pace, and—he *must* get to Bristol—by Thursday! And David Forester rubbed the back of his hand across his eyes, where the tears had gathered.

At last, after days of hardship, the rows of dingy houses and tall smoking chimneys hove in sight. It was Thursday morning, and still early, and the traveller thanked God. But he soon came to a halt, uncertain of the direction to take, though he had some vague idea of it. A policeman was in sight. Should he ask him? No, never. He could not ask any one!

But sooner even than he had hoped, David sighted a solid, grim building, and knew that his journey was at an end, for this was Bristol gaol!

David glanced at the entrance, then summoning courage, asked if he might see the chaplain. After some delay his request was granted, and the kind clergyman heard his story. He would wait outside for his sister, David said, if the gentleman would kindly say nothing, but be good enough to tell him the door by which she would leave, and the exact time.

Later, the brother stood, waiting—waiting! How the time dragged! The chimes in a steeple near by struck the hour. Still thirty minutes more! The quarter struck—then at last, the half-hour!

David's heart beat fast. Had he mistaken the door? But no—there

## David Forester's Quest

was the sound of a key grating in the lock, the door was thrust open and a young woman hurried out! She looked dazed, but glanced neither to right nor left, seeming only to wish to avoid observation.

A form glided out from the shadows of the wall, while a voice called, "Jennie—Jennie!"

The girl started, quickened her pace, but at the repeated cry looked back and paused. "You, Davie—you!" she gasped; then half defiantly, "How did *you* get *here*?"

"I came—to take you home—Jennie," replied her brother, linking his arm in hers.

"No, never," she cried. "I'm not good enough for the likes of you. Oh! let me go—anywhere!" and she tried to free herself of his arm.

"No, Jennie," he said, "I've walked all the way from Liverpool—for this, and I'm not going back without you. I've saved enough money for our journey back. Come."

It was too much. The brother had won! Jennie broke down, and wept

bitterly. "To think you should care for me like that!" she sobbed. "Oh, Davie! if you hadn't come, I should have gone—down—down! I just didn't care what became of me. But now—now—that you love me still——"

Jennie, alone with David in a third-class compartment, was each moment being whirled farther from the scene of her disgrace. "I shall never get over it, Davie, that you should tramp all those long miles, just for me," she said.

"Ah, that was nothing," replied her brother; "but, Jennie, what about the One Who trod such a much rougher road for you and for me, Who steadfastly set His Face to go up to Jerusalem and the cross—Who did *all that*, to bring us poor sinners home!"

The words, by the power of the Holy Spirit, arrested the poor wanderer. She is now an earnest Christian and Church worker, and having been forgiven much, she loves much. "But, Davie," she often says, "it was *your* love that helped me to understand and believe in God's Love. By seeking me and bringing me back to your home, you helped me to find the Father's House too!"

We may never be called upon to do as David Forester did. But let us ever remember that even a smile, a kind word, a helpful act, may be used by God to be the turning-point of the life of another!

So may our daily prayer be:

.. Lord, make me a blessing to-day,  
A blessing to some one, I pray;  
In all that I do, in all that I say,  
Oh, make me a blessing to-day."

MARY ALISON



In Leafy June



# Her High Compliment

MISS TOMAN had told the Sunday school superintendent that she meant to give up her class of boys. "I am convinced that I am not a teacher," she said. "I have done my best, but it seems to me I have made little impression. Of course I love the boys, but they are so unresponsive, so trying at times."

But the superintendent persuaded her to keep on. "Even if your teaching is wasted, which I do not admit," he argued, "the life you have lived before those boys has not been wasted."

The truth of that remark came to her in an unexpected way the very next Sunday. The class were talking about heaven and how they would feel to find that some one they loved was not there.

"Suppose we think of it this way, boys," she said. "We have been together as a class for some time. We have had good times together. Suppose we got the class together in heaven and found three or four missing. You

know how you would feel. Can't you see how important it is that we live, each and every one of us, so that we'll all be present when the class meets in heaven?"

The boys were looking at her with serious, wide eyes.

"That applies to me as well as to you," she went on. "It is just as important that I live so that I'll be sure of meeting you in heaven. Suppose all the rest of you met there; suppose you were all present but me. Suppose you hunted everywhere for me and couldn't find me. What would you think?"

The serious look on their faces deepened. "We'd know, Miss Toman," said Jim, the noisiest, the most trying of them all, "that you hadn't died yet."

It was half in laughter, half in tears, that Miss Toman told the superintendent about the incident. "I wonder," she said, "if I'll ever receive a finer compliment than that!"

# Govern your Troubles

NO matter how your heart aches, learn to greet everybody with a smile, with a sweet, cheerful expression. Do not parade your troubles. The people you are tempted to load with them may have all they can bear of their own.

I once knew a woman who got into such a habit of telling her troubles to everybody, that no matter what others might be suffering, they must stop and listen to her tale of woe. She never allowed an opportunity to tell somebody of her troubles to pass unimproved. This became such a confirmed habit with

her that when she got old, even people who felt kindly toward her avoided her.

A perfect contrast to this woman is a very sweet, charming old lady whose life has been full of trouble, but who has a way of covering it up so that one who did not know her circumstances would never dream that she had any troubles. She knows how to hide her aches and pains, to conceal the thorn that is pricking her, and to keep unpleasant things to herself.

It is a great thing to learn to hide our own troubles, and sympathise with others in theirs.



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[Drawn by W. Bryce Hamilton]

He put down the bucket and faced Isaac. "What d'you mean?" he gasped

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# “The Way o’ the Grain”

SOUNDS of hard labour came from the shed where Joshua and Isaac kept their coal.

The two old men shared one very large garden, and their cottage doors stood so close together that it was possible for Isaac, by a twist of his long body, to stand with his feet on his own threshold and his head in Joshua’s.

Many loud bangs were succeeded by an irritable “Blow the coal!”

“Shut up!” rudely ejaculated “John Wesley,” the parrot, which was seated upon Isaac’s shoulder while he cleaned its cage.

“Joshua’s gettin’ worried about somethin’,” he remarked to the bird. “Let’s go and see what’s up.”

Still with the parrot perched upon his shoulder, Isaac opened the door of the shed, to be met by a cloud of coal dust.

“Whatever are you doin’?” he queried, when he could speak.

Joshua wore no coat, and a large apron was tied about his middle. His face was red with exercise and anger, and black where he had rubbed it with his dirty hands. His beautiful white hair had lost its freshness.

“Well,” said Isaac, “you looks a beauty, I must say. Can’t you break a bit o’ coal without all this fuss an’ mess? Your hair’s pale black.”

“You’d be pale black,” replied the other, “if you’d been here all mornin’ tryin’ to break this coal. Why, they oughter pay us fer usin’ the stuff, instead o’ chargin’ us for it. Here am I—bang—thump—bang—thump—an’ all that happens is little bits flies off and hits me in the eye.”

Joshua took in a great breath and much dust, and struck once more.

“There,” he said, “what did I tell you?”

“Joshua Judges,” said Isaac, “at your age”—both men were over seventy—“you oughter know better. You be strikin’ that coal agen the grain. Give me the chopper.”

Isaac put his shoulder close to Joshua’s, as a hint to John Wesley that he was desired to move. The bird fluttered to Joshua’s head and viciously pulled his hair.

“You knows that bird don’t like me,” said the old man reproachfully.

“He knows you don’t like him,” replied Isaac; “there’s a good bit o’ the old Adam in John. Now watch.”

He seized the axe and brought it down heavily on a huge piece of coal, which at once broke into several pieces.

“There,” said Isaac; “knock the way o’ the grain, and you’ll soon be done.”

“I’m goin’ to have some dinner first,” replied Joshua with decision.

“Have you got any pertatoes cooked?” asked Isaac.

“Yes, I put ’em in to roast.”

“Bring ’em in to me. I’ve got some cold meat an’ pickles.”

The two old friends often arranged their meals in this way, for Isaac had been a widower for years, and it was well known in the village that Joshua “couldn’t abide women” and had never married.

When Joshua arrived with the dish of steaming potatoes, Isaac was smoothing a clean tablecloth.

“Be you going to see Bill Brown this afternoon?” asked Joshua.

“Susan,” remarked Isaac to his big black cat, which was sitting on the head of the sofa very near to the small table that held the parrot’s cage, “move your tail, else John Wesley ’ll pinch it. Goin’ to Bill’s? Yes, I am. Some one must tell him he’s makin’ a fool of hisself. I’m his Class leader, and I’ve knowed him since he was born, so I s’pose I must.”

“You ain’t obliged to,” replied his friend; “I don’t s’pose he’ll pass the exam.”

“Did you ever know any one pass the local preachers’ exam. what couldn’t preach?” inquired Isaac innocently.

“I thinks we oughter to be charitable, an’—”

“So do I, but a swelled head without much in it ain’t no qualification for preachin’. You knows as well as I do, Joshua, that Bill can’t preach, an’ never will. There is times when it’s kind to tell the plain truth. The best thing to do is stop him.”

“P’raps some one ’ll report unfavourably on Sunday. He’s got a note from the Super to preach at Northend.”

“Maybe they will, an’ maybe they won’t. Folks is afraid o’ giving offence. What should you think if I was to go round the circuit singin’? Me, with a voice like a wheel what wants oilin’!”

“I should think,” said Joshua, “as you was a—was very much mistaken.”

## "The Way o' the Grain"

"Yes," retorted Isaac, "I should think I was a—was very much mistaken, an' I thinks Bill is too. Who's going to wash up?"

Bill Brown, who with his widowed mother kept a small dairy farm, was busy feeding some calves with separated milk when Isaac arrived and walked into the cowshed.

"Hullo, Bill!"

"Hullo, Mr. Morris!" replied the young farmer, still holding the bucket of milk for the calf.

"How many times have you preached, Bill?"

"Twice. Why?"

"Well, my boy, it's twice too many, an' the sooner you stops the better."

The calf with the gentle eyes wondered why it was robbed of its milk. A dull red flush rose to the roots of Bill's hair. He put down the bucket and faced Isaac.

"What d'you mean?" he gasped.

"I means," said Isaac, whose voice was kind though his words were blunt, "what I telled you some time ago. You can't preach, an' if you ain't got sense enough to see it, it's time some one telled you. It's a lot kinder to say it afore your face than behind your back. You take my tip, Bill, an' stop."

"Mr. Morris," said the farmer, when he could speak, "I shan't forgive you for what you've said to me to-day."

"I didn't want to hurt you, Bill; I've only telled you the plain truth, an'——" Isaac stopped, for he was addressing a frightened calf. Bill Brown had gone.

Joshua listened in silence to his friend's story. "Isaac," he said, "you've done just what you telled me not to do with that coal. You've hit him agen the grain."

"I s'pose I have," sighed Isaac; "but I've tried givin' him a gentle hint, an' he didn't take it. Now plain speakin' don't do. It's a job to find the way o' the grain with some folk, ain't it, Susan?" he queried, rubbing that animal's ear.

"Never mind," said Joshua cheerfully. "Put some sugar in your tea and cheer up. Maybe the Lord 'll show him, an' if the Lord strikes, He'll strike the way o' the grain."

\* \* \* \*

Bill Brown's affection for his aged mother was deep and real. He resolved to tell her nothing of Isaac's visit, but her blue eyes were keen, and Bill was the child of her old age. As

she poured the water from the shining kettle to the teapot, she glanced at her son.

"What's the matter, Bill?"

"Nothing very much, mother. I'll cut the bread."

"I seed Isaac go. What did he say to upset you?"

Then the young farmer told the story. "And what do you think of it, mother?" he finished.

Mrs. Brown's little bent body was almost buried in the big chair. She turned her eyes from the fire to her son's face.

"It's the first plain question on the subject you've asked me," she said gently, "an' I'll give you a plain answer. I think Isaac oughter have put it kinder, and I'll tell him so, but—I—I—don't think you'll ever make a preacher, Bill. I've tried to tell you so, but you never understood."

"But, mother, I feel called to preach. I want to."

"I dare say you wants to," replied Mrs. Brown, ignoring the first part of his sentence; "but maybe you'll see your mistake before long."

"Will you be able to manage with Daisy ill, while I'm at Northend to-morrow?" (Daisy was a cow.)

"Yes, I'll manage," said his mother, putting her work-worn hand on her son's head as she passed him to put away the tea things.

Bill was not happy when he set out to his appointment on the Sunday. His vanity was wounded, for Isaac had indeed struck "agen the grain"; he was worried about leaving his mother alone on the farm; and a small voice, which he tried to stifle, would persist in asking him if there was not some truth in Isaac's blunt words.

All this made his attempt at preaching worse than ever, and he was very thankful when it was time to turn his footsteps homeward. He saw the peaceful lamplight shining through the uncurtained kitchen window; he could see the simple supper, and his mother's chair; no doubt, as usual, her small figure was hidden in it.

When he opened the door there was no welcoming voice. "Mother!" he said gently. Then, when there came no answer, "Mother," he called loudly this time.

Still no answer, and Bill's heart began to beat heavily. He rushed upstairs, from one room to another. Nobody was there.

With a feeling of relief he remembered the ailing cow. No doubt his mother was there.



## "The Way o' the Grain"

He ran to the shed, but for some reason the door would not open.

Cold dread clutched his heart. He seized a ladder and climbed to the small door that opened into the loft above the cowshed. From thence he scrambled down and saw his mother lying close to the door, motionless, apparently dead.

With his breath coming in great sobs, Bill picked up the fragile body and carried it to the house, then he rushed to Isaac, who was his nearest neighbour.

The two old friends were having supper in Joshua's cottage. Isaac's big black cat purred on his knee, and John Wesley croaked remarks into his ear, for these two nearly always went with their master when he visited Joshua.

Bill sobbed out his story as best he could.

"I'll go for the doctor," said Isaac; "and Joshua'll fetch the nurse."

The doctor said plainly that Mrs. Brown was too old to be left in charge of the farm, and that he did not think she could live.

All night Isaac and Joshua remained with

Bill, but they could not comfort him. Up and down the old-fashioned kitchen he paced. "I can't preach," he said; "but I can look after farm and mother. What a blind fool I've been!"

In that cold grey hour before dawn, they heard the doctor creep downstairs, and he said that his patient would live.

"You can just look at her," he said kindly to Bill; "but not a sound, mind, and you take an old man's advice and give up preaching and take up practising, you——"

Bill was upstairs kneeling in absolute silence by his mother's bed. He dared not speak. Something touched his head. Slowly, gently, he lifted his arm, and his great fingers closed over the little hard ones.

Joshua, following Isaac out into the sweet fresh morning, said, "God strikes the way o' the grain, don't He, Isaac?"

"He do, Joshua, He do," replied the other. "I hadn't no more sense with Bill than you had with the coal. So come on," he added, linking his arm in his friend's; "it's two old noodles together."

SIBYL HADDOCK

## An Easy First

By LUCY LAING

**J**IM BRAYLEY was a very good all-round husband, yet he had one irritating fault which nearly drove his wife to distraction: whatever *she* did came short of Mrs. Brown's achievements, or Mrs. Robinson's, or Mrs. Smith's.

Poor Mary Brayley! It was very hard to bear, especially when she knew that, given some of the money her husband squandered in treating his mates at the Red Lion, her efforts would have "knocked spots off" these other women.

For instance, when they were at Mrs. Brown's to tea Jim would say to his host: "You are a lucky beggar to have a wife who makes such cakes." And then, turning to his own better half, remark smilingly, "Get Mrs. Brown to give you the recipe of that cake, Mary; it's a long time since I've tasted anything half so good."

And Mary's face had flushed as she noticed Mrs. Brown's triumphant smile and patronising promise to help her.

Then, again, the children's clothes. Mary slaved from morning until night to get through

her housework in order to make Molly's and Daisy's clothes, yet Jim actually spoke disparagingly of her efforts.

"So old-fashioned," he frowned, "the kids might have come out of the Ark. Look at Mrs. Smith's youngsters; very different touch about them, eh?"

Mary felt her eyes smart.

"Janey Smith has more money to manage with than I have," she said. "I do my best on what you give me, Jim, but when the children's clothes have to be made from my old ones, or left-offs passed on by friends, it isn't possible to make them smart."

"Oh rubbish, my dear," he retorted. "Mrs. Robinson has less to manage on than you do, and she was telling me she makes all her Vera's clothes."

A hot retort rose to Mary's lips, but she smothered it and went on ironing patiently. A few minutes afterwards, however, when her husband had gone out, she let the iron get cold, and, laying her pretty curly head upon her arms,

## An Easy First

indulged in a good cry across the kitchen table. And this was how Mrs. Sankey found her when she came in shortly afterwards. It was so strange to see Mary Brayley anything but bright and cheerful that she exclaimed in dismay.

"Well, you've caught me fairly this time, Mrs. Sankey," Mary said, trying to smile as she wiped her eyes. "I feel almost too discouraged to go on." And the young wife poured out her trouble into her friend's sympathetic ear. When she concluded her story with "There! now you know all," her companion did not speak for a full minute.

"Well," she said at length, "I'll give you my advice for what it is worth, but first let me say I don't think there is any real cause for you to be upset. In my opinion you head the list of housewives in this village—you have two sweet children, and a good husband. He has his faults, but they can be cured easily, and it's up to you to do it."

Mary opened her big tear-stained eyes to their widest extent.

"Up to me, Mrs. Sankey? What can I do?"

Her companion smiled mysteriously.

"Listen!" she said.

\* \* \* \*

It was a month later, and the birthday of Mrs. Sankey's little twin girls. Mrs. Sankey was a war widow, and was considered "stand-offish" by the villagers, and when Jim Brayley, his wife, and wee daughters were invited to the birthday tea he smiled complacently.

Mrs. Sankey, very dainty in a pretty voile dress, and the twins exactly alike in spotted muslin, welcomed their visitors warmly. The table was covered with good things, and Mary awaited her husband's usual uncalled-for remarks with suppressed excitement. They soon came. After sampling the good things before him, he began as usual:

"Are all these delightful things home-made, Mrs. Sankey?" he asked.

"Oh yes.

everything," she answered; "we never eat bought stuff."

He looked at Mary and sighed.

"My dear, what a lesson for you! Do take it to heart and *try* to imitate Mrs. Sankey."

Did a dimple appear for a moment in Mary's cheek?

"I thought you liked my last cake so much, Jim," she said.

"So I did, so I did, but *these*——"

He stopped as if unable to voice his appreciation. "And I don't want to be personal," he went on, "but Mrs. Sankey's little girls' dresses are just the style of thing I should like for our girlies. If you could give my wife an idea now and then, Mrs. Sankey, I should be most grateful."

Their hostess smiled, and before answering sent the children into another room to play.

"Little pitchers have long ears," she remarked when they were alone again. "Your suggestion that I should give your wife ideas is truly amusing. The shoe is on the other foot, Mr. Brayley. *She* gave me all the ideas for our dresses. *She made them, too!*"

Jim Brayley raised his eyebrows.

"You must have your little joke, I see," he smiled.

"It is not a joke, Jim," his wife said with spirit. "I *did* make Mrs. Sankey's dress, and her little girls' as well, and I could make one for myself and Molly and Daisy just as easily, if I had the material."

He looked thoroughly sheepish, as well as astonished, while Mrs. Sankey continued mercilessly:

"I reckon your wife stands an easy first among the wives of this place, James Brayley. Show me a better amateur dress-maker if you can, or—a better cook!"

"Cook!" he exclaimed in startled tones, the truth gradually dawning.

"Yes! Your wife





## An Easy First

made all the good things we had for tea, and you were very lavish in your praise of them."

This was too much, however. Poor Jim Brayley collapsed entirely.

The lesson was a severe one, yet results proved satisfactory. At first Jim resented being "let down" before Mrs. Sankey, but when he realised

the many "lettings down" poor Mary had suffered at his hands he saw the matter from a different view-point.

Anyway, Mary has no cause to be downhearted any more, because the extra money her husband allows her has shown him of what she is capable, and he is now the proudest husband in the village.

## Why do Good People Suffer?

**L**IKE most other people, I have always (ever since I was old enough to think about it at all) been puzzled by the suffering in the world, especially the suffering of good people. Evil-living people bring suffering upon themselves by their conduct; they could avoid it if they choose to amend their lives, and there is no mystery about it. But why should good people, who try to serve God, suffer? Why should some of them dread the sleepless nights as darkness falls, and rise in the morning to face another day of pain and distress?

In these days, especially, there are many—perhaps more than there ever were before—whose whole lives are made a misery by shattered nerves, arising from the grief of losing loved ones in the Great War. But suffering of one kind or another there has always been in the world, and thoughtful people have been driven to ask—why? A noted Frenchman, looking round at the pain and grief borne by his fellow-men, said that he would not like to be God, for if he were, the sight of the suffering in the world he had made would drive him mad. None of us, probably, would wish to use such words; but many have wondered how such suffering can be inflicted, or at any rate permitted, by One whom we address as "Almighty and most merciful Father."

We cannot understand it, and probably never shall in this world, in which we see only a very tiny part of a great operation going on. Think for a moment of what this earth is on which we live. It is but as one grain of dust in a great heap, compared with the millions of great worlds about it in space. So small in comparison is it, that the people (if there are any) on the nearest fixed star, if they can see only as well as we can with our largest telescopes, have never seen our earth at all—it is too tiny a speck. They

do not know that it exists, and consequently would never miss it if it were destroyed. And if the earth itself is so tiny and insignificant, what of us folks who live on it for a few short years?

Each of us is but one of hundreds of millions that together make up the human race, or rather that portion of it inhabiting the earth at the moment. Just as a human body is never exactly the same for two minutes together, but is in a continual state of change, always getting rid of waste particles and always being renewed by means of food and air, so too the human race is continually changing. Every moment some members of it die, and every moment others are born. The longest-lived of us rarely spend a hundred years on this earth, and most spend far less.

Now ask yourself fairly, what can such a being as man understand of the plans and doings of the Almighty, who in the beginning—ages before man existed at all—created the heavens and the earth? God's plans require eternity for their working out; they include the movements of heavenly bodies so vast and wonderful that we can hardly conceive of them, of forces of which we can form no idea, and of the services of countless hosts of angels, who may be all around us, but of whom few of our race have ever caught a glimpse.

God Himself, indeed, is all around us; in Him, says St. Paul, we live and move and have our being, but no man has seen God at any time. In this very earth on which we live are powers and forces which we are only just beginning to learn about and use, though they were here before the first man made his appearance. How many wonders yet remain to be discovered, we cannot tell. How can we, seeing for a moment, as it were, a glimpse of a

## Why do Good People Suffer?

tiny portion of the working out of God's plans, and unable to understand even that portion—how can we expect to understand those plans as a whole?

Yet they concern us very much indeed. Our life here, short as it is, is in God's plan a stage on the road to a life so glorious that we cannot even think of it. It cannot be described, because words can only express ideas that we form in our minds, and no man can form an idea of what that life will be like. St. Paul, writing to the people of Corinth, says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." And we ourselves, in God's plan, are to undergo a great and glorious change. We are God's children, though on this earth perhaps no one would suspect it, so often do we disgrace the heavenly family to which we belong. But then, though we cannot tell how it will come about, we shall be known as children of our heavenly Father. "Beloved," writes St. John to his fellow-Christians, "now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him!"

But what, you may ask, has all this to do with suffering? Just this: that for most of us, at any rate, the suffering is something that we must pass through in order to get to the glory. Have you ever noticed how much our Lord spoke of suffering—not as something to be shirked or grumbled about, but as something to be gone through, and welcomed rather than otherwise?

St. Paul himself, whose words we have already quoted, was, you may remember, struck blind when on his way to Damascus to persecute the followers of Jesus Christ. It showed him what a mistake he was making; he realised that Jesus was really the Son of God, who had lived on earth as Man and, after a life of doing good, had died a cruel and shameful death. Paul became anxious to undo as far as he could the mischief he had done, and to bring men everywhere to believe in Jesus as God.

So God sent one of His servants, named Ananias, to lay his hand on Paul that the latter might receive his sight again; "for," said God, "I will show him"—what? The thousands of people who through his preaching should believe in Christ? The countries where the Gospel should be preached by himself and his followers? The loving veneration with which his name, and the story of his doings, should

be handed down from generation to generation? No; none of these things. "I will show him how great things he must *suffer* for My name's sake."

Our Lord Himself when going about with His disciples had His coming sufferings always in His mind. "From that time forth," says St. Luke, "began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things . . . and be killed." Even He, Son of God that He was, as Man "learned obedience by the things that He suffered."

It was the road that the Master Himself trod; His followers in all ages must tread it too. "If any man will come after Me," said Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Time after time we find Christ's early followers speaking of suffering as something that Christians must expect and welcome. They themselves, when cruelly flogged for preaching, "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's sake."

"We are the children of God," says St. Paul, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

So, though we cannot *understand* God's plans, we can *trust* them. If we are called upon to bear suffering, we need not take it as a sign that God either cares nothing about us, or has a special spite against us. Though we cannot tell how, in some way, if we submit to it as God's will, it is carrying out God's plan for us. It is not pleasant at the time: St. Paul, who suffered more than most men, owns as much. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons," he says. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards——"

Yes, afterward we shall find it was worth while, if it helped to fit us for a place in God's eternal and glorious kingdom. As the writer of an old hymn says, speaking of the "living stones" which God had prepared for His own use—

"Many a blow and biting sculpture  
Polished well those stones elect,  
In their places now compacted  
By the heavenly Architect,  
Who therewith has willed for ever  
That His palace should be decked."





# A BUSINESS AGREEMENT

By Eleanor Clare

**I**T was early in July. The night had been very hot and silent; and the hazy morning foretold another hot day. Old Jabez Baillie had tossed about restlessly in his oven-like room. The steel works had been closed down for some time, but were to be opened again that morning, under new management. He had missed the rosy glow from the blast furnaces. They used to light up his room at night. The narrow street in which he lived was a short cut to the work, so he was not surprised to hear the clattering of many feet along the pavement. It sounded like an army out of step.

Very soon he was looking down upon the crowd below, hurrying to the gates. All were to have an equal chance; so stated the posters that were placarded everywhere.

Jabez was a sharp-featured man, still upright, with white hair and grizzled white beard. "All to have an equal chance; young and old," he muttered. Without further ado, he took his coat, now threadbare and green with age, from the rail of the bed and went downstairs.

There was a steady stream of men coming from another narrow street. He joined them. About twenty yards away, to the right, were the grey solemn-looking chimneys; and, at the other side of the big iron gates where they halted, was the grey slag bank. Some of the men looked suspiciously at one another until the thought that all would have an equal chance made them feel more friendly disposed.

At last a foreman came and admitted about twenty, and the old man edged a little closer to the gate. Two hours later, the twenty having been set to work in various departments suited to their needs, others were admitted. But old

Jabez was pushed a little to one side. Then, after a while, some more men went in, then some more; until the group waiting outside dwindled to six men.

Hours passed. Jabez talked to no one. He was beginning to feel the heat from the furnaces, and the sun was beating down upon his head. There was no shade anywhere. He was thirsty, but he was afraid to leave in case he might lose his chance.

He shaded his eyes from the sun while he watched an engine-driver and a stoker working on the slag-bank; and when he turned round it was to see that only a boy and himself remained on the wrong side of the gates. The boy sat on the step, munching an apple.

"Those four chaps have gone in," he said.

Jabez just gazed at him helplessly. He looked weary.

A shrill whistle sounded; then some of the machines were still. It was the dinner hour. There was a tramping of feet along a wooden gangway; but the high stone wall hid the workers, and gradually their footsteps died away as they reached another part of the works, evidently arranged for the men to eat in comfort—so it seemed to the two waiting.

The boy produced a bottle of water and another withered apple from his pocket. He eyed the old man kindly:

"Have a drink?" he asked; "and here's an apple."

The old man took the bottle with eager, trembling hands, and moistened his parched throat; but he refused the apple with a kindly smile.

A temporary shed had been arranged for the workers until a proper dining-room could be built. At one end were plates of beef, sandwiches, and coffee, placed on a trestle, and each man helped himself to a knife and fork from a long tray at one end of it. The men sat on boxes and cases that were lying about. They were glad to be in the shade. They stretched their limbs and relaxed their muscles.

A knot of men standing near the door of the

## A Business Agreement

shed looked surprised to see the manager pass along with four men and enter a carpenter's shop. Then the men, after being shown what to do, came and ate with the rest before starting.

"You're late, mates!" was the greeting.

"Can't help that!" was the reply. "We're not as lucky as you! We've had to wait."

"They say the owner's a millionaire, and that he's not out for profit, because it warps human nature," said a man in corduroys who had worked on the slag-bank since early morning. He sat on the edge of a cask.

"Every one's going to receive enough for the necessities of life—but no more!" exclaimed the stoker, taking a seat beside him. "They say he's going to build new houses for us; a sort of garden suburb, with wireless and baths."

"We'll take all that with a grain of salt, and see what we get for our wages," laughed the other.

And all the time, outside the gates, the old man paced to and fro, while the pitiless sun

beat down upon an already baked pavement. He had watched the molten slag being tipped into the wagon until he was weary. He was beginning to despair. The foreman had, evidently, all the men he needed—for that day, at all events. But he could not leave, for there was always a remote chance of being employed.

He glanced at the boy; he was leaning against the gate, fast asleep, but the sun's rays had no effect on the young, upturned face. He yearned to close his eyes also. He did, for a moment, just to shut out the high, bare wall opposite, and the dazzling road.

Then there was the sound of an approaching footstep. He roused the boy just in time; for a man with a clean-shaven face and kind eyes stood at the gate.

"Why are you standing here idle?" he asked. His voice was kind, too.

"Because we can't get work, sir," replied Jabez in a quavering voice.

"Come with me!"



"And hasn't he borne the burden and heat of the day also?"



## A Business Agreement

He took them down a narrow footpath to the long shed where the men had dined. After giving them some food the manager set them to work to gather shavings from the floor of a wood-shop. The stoker and the engine-driver on the slag-bank looked across in surprise that any one should be admitted so late in the day.

An hour went by ; then a hooter sounded, and the men were informed that they would be paid by the day ; so that each man would be free to come or stay away next day, just as he chose.

The pay office was close to where the old man and the boy had been set to work ; and the men who had worked in the wood-shop came next. Consequently the last to be admitted were the first to be paid.

The office was reached by a wide flight of wooden stairs with a railing running down the middle. The men went up one side, and, having received their wages, passed down the other side. Some of the men noticed, to their surprise and joy, that those who were employed last received quite good pay. They waited eagerly for their turn.

But, to their surprise and indignation, they received the same amount. There was surely a mistake ! The eyes of the engine-driver flashed angrily at old Jabez and the boy. He motioned them to come back and have the payment put right. There was a moment's hesitation, then Jabez and the boy, after exchanging a quick glance, decided to return. The rest, curious as to what would happen, and in the hope that they might receive more themselves, followed also.

The owner was in his office, and the door was still open. The men crowded around it, making way specially for those who had most cause to complain, and, at their suggestion, the old man and boy were pushed forward as the cause of their complaint.

"We've worked all day in the heat," grumbled the stoker ; "and this old rogue came in an hour ago, and you've paid him the same wages !"

"And hasn't he borne the burden and heat of the day also ?" the owner replied quietly. "Ay ! and a burden bordering on despair ; whereas you spent an hour resting in the shade at dinner-time." The man had nothing to say to that. "It was no fault of theirs, my friend, that they were not employed sooner. They *wanted* work ; but no one employed them.

"Listen, men," he went on, as the grumbler still remained silent. "I have gathered my wealth, not for enjoyment, but for a big enter-

prise ; and I want your co-operation. The capitalist, I admit, is often an idler, and as such cannot justify his existence ; on the other hand, the working man often works selfishly and bitterly, and thinks his unhappiness is due to the condition of his employment, whereas it is oftener due to himself.

"But he is not altogether to blame." The owner's voice became very gentle and compassionate. "A man who is bound continually in the trammels of daily work is rather like one on a tread-mill ; and when he has time to think then he is too tired. It seems to me, that if a man's mind has to be so occupied in making ends meet he cannot admit into his heart, or, at least, be conscious of the Love of God : and he cannot love his neighbour if he does not love God.

"My plan is, that men should have time to think ; time to realise that they have—nay, that they *are* souls, and that each soul is precious to the Lord. Men ! There will be no peace on earth until there is peace in our hearts ; and there will be no peace in our hearts until we love our neighbour as ourselves !"

The eyes of the speaker were fixed on the man who had grumbled most.

"After what you've said, sir," began the man apologetically, "I can only think of this old man waiting outside in despair. He bore the burden and heat of the day, too, as you said. And it brings to mind a parable of the Lord. I remember it well, for it used to worry my old dad."

"Speak up, man ! speak up !" shouted a voice in the crowd.

"It was about labourers who worked in a vineyard," he continued, raising his voice so that all could hear. "It didn't seem fair to them that all should receive the same amount. But now I understand that it means that we should *desire* the Kingdom of Heaven and wait patiently for it, like this old man and boy waited at the gate for work. And now, good-bye, sir ! And thank you. Come on, mates," he exclaimed, turning to the crowd.

They were about to cheer, but the owner raised a warning hand, smiled kindly upon the men and watched them turn towards the gate. Then he went into his office and shut the door. He felt deeply moved ; but he had known all the time that beneath the roughest surface there beat a tender heart.

And he who was first and he who was last walked side by side.

"Are you coming again to-morrow ?" asked Jabez.

## A Business Agreement

"You bet!" said the engine-driver. "A boss who sees all sides of a question is a boss to be respected."

"That's because he's got his idea from the Lord Himself," said Jabez.

"What idea?" asked the stoker, who had caught up to them.

"Have you got a Bible?" inquired his mate.

"Yes! There's one somewhere; as big and as heavy as a baby; and with print that's good for the eyes!"

"Well, you'll find the parable in the

Gospels." They had come to the street turning. "So long!" he added; "see you to-morrow."

So each went to his own dwelling, the mind of each fixed on that village Carpenter who had walked amongst men two thousand years ago. But somehow He seemed to have been with them all the while, but they had been so busy about things that didn't matter that they had not noticed Him.

But now, He would draw near, and reason with them while they turned to the twentieth chapter of St. Matthew.

## Moortor Folk

### *Some Happenings in a quiet Village*

By AMOS E. DENNER

#### Carrier Metcalf

CARRIER METCALF was one of the most hard-working men in Moortor village.

Yet folk declared that he was about the unluckiest mortal they knew. Genuine prosperity always seemed to elude him, so that he arrived at middle life no better off from a worldly standpoint than when he commenced business twenty years previously; and this in spite of the fact that his old horse and wagon had been replaced by a neat motor-van.

"I can't make the man out," mused old Granny Whitlock one day, after paying a neighbourly call on the carrier's household. "Carrier Tom isn't what I should call a careless fellow. . . . If it was that noodle of a Ned Payne I could understand. . . . But it seems as soon as he earns a bit of money one way he loses it another. . . . To think that he had such a smash up with his van yesterday. . . . And not insured either. . . . He must have been foolish to let his policy lapse. . . . But there. . . . I suppose he wanted the money for other things. . . . Driving on his wrong side too. . . . Oh dear! Oh dear!"

The old lady moved about preparing a cup of tea for herself, then suddenly halted, teapot in hand, as a swift thought came to her.

"Strange that my Bible-reading should be *that* for this morning," she exclaimed half aloud. "Now, I wonder— But just let me have another look."

And taking her well-worn Bible, she opened it for the second time that day at chapter seventeen of Jeremiah. Then, as was her wont,

she read out loud the words of the old Book. Verses seven to eleven particularly caught her eye, and she went back over them again and read carefully:

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be as a fool."

The old lady took off her spectacles at this point, and did some hard thinking. Then, in addition to asking a blessing upon the simple repast she was about to partake of, she breathed a loving prayer on behalf of Tom Metcalf. And if he did but know it, that prayer was yet to prove to the unfortunate man, that amongst the precious things in the realm of Gospel grace is the ministry of intercession.

\* \* \* \*

For a whole fortnight after his smash, Tom Metcalf just mooned about the place like a man in a dream. He made no attempt to get his



## Moortor Folk

van repaired, and soon villagers' tongues began to wag.

"Going soft in the head!" was the opinion that Ned Payne vouchsafed to Granny Whitlock, on learning that for the second time during the fortnight the carrier had rushed away from the old lady, when calling to see him, and had locked himself in the motor-house.

"Pretty sort of 'brother believer' he is," went on the cobbler, with a chuckle at this sly reference to the fact that usually Carrier Tom was a regular attendant at a place of worship.

Granny Whitlock looked at the cobbler, and gave a contemptuous little sniff.

"Better be 'soft-headed' than to have a head that you can't drive a nail into," she retorted, with an effort at controlling impatience at sight of the grinning face of the village oracle.

"I suppose you'll be trying the 'coals of fire' stunt on him?" was Ned Payne's next shaft. And then he got a regular blast of what he termed "hot air" from the old soul.

"Look here, you gawmless creature!" she exclaimed firmly. "If your flapdoodle trash is of any use, then just try it on with that poor fellow-man of yours. You're always saying big things about your precious system of so-called brotherhood. Now's your chance to show what it's made of. Here's a man down in the world. Are you going to give him a lift up? He's broken-hearted over something. Can you do anything to heal him? . . . But there, what's the use of my talking? The old Book says 'Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like unto him.' I bid you good day, Mr. Windbag, and if I do try the coals of fire stunt as you are pleased to call it, then maybe the coals are better than your precious rubbish which neither burns, smokes, nor goes out!"

So saying, the old lady went on her way, determined to have another try at seeing Tom Metcalf. She was met on the

door-step of the carrier's house by the man's wife, red-eyed, and in obvious distress.

"Thank God, some one has come," eagerly exclaimed the woman. "My poor Tom is in the kitchen saying most dreadful things. . . . Talking of drowning himself one minute, and of giving himself up to the police in the next breath. . . . I was thinking of sending for you, only I knew Tom has run away from you twice already and——"

"Let me come right in, dearie," interrupted the old lady.

Inside the kitchen the man was pacing up and down, groaning and muttering more or less incoherently, and at sight of his pale haggard face, the heart of old Granny Whitlock went out



"Thank God, some one has come," eagerly exclaimed the woman

## Moortor Folk

in sympathy to the unfortunate fellow, whatever might be the cause of his mental anguish.

"I'm a lost soul!" he shouted, clapping his hands to his head, as though to prevent something from coming apart. And then, upon seeing Granny Whitlock, he exclaimed further: "What have you come here to torment me for? Haven't I suffered enough already? I'm finished! Let me go. . . . Only the river can help me."

Here the troubled man made as though to push past Granny Whitlock, and to get to the door, but the old lady intercepted his path.

"Steady, Tom! You wouldn't willingly knock down an old woman like me, I know," she said soothingly. Then taking the man's hand and leading him to the couch, she said quietly: "Let's sit down here, and have a little talk all about it. I don't know what your trouble is, but I've lived long enough in the world to know that 'tis a big mistake to try and cross a bridge before really coming to it." Then, flashing an understanding look at Tom Metcalf's wife, she said: "I've brought along some little home-made scones in my bag. We could all be a nice little tea-party together, like. Nothing beats a cup of tea for a bad headache, Tom. And, by the way, here's some of those acid drops that you are always so fond of. I made a fresh lot yesterday. . . . But you musn't have any till after tea. . . . That's it, Mrs. Metcalf. Let's have tea, afternoon fashion, like the gentlefolk. We can hold the plates on our laps as well as they."

Thus by various simple little ruses did the old lady succeed in soothing her troubled neighbour into a condition of mind more suitable for the telling of an unusual story which, instinct told her, was surely coming.

\* \* \* \* \*

"That smashing of my motor-van, a fortnight ago, was the last straw," said Tom Metcalf, after the tea-things had been put away.

The man was now steadier, and calmer than he had been for many a day, and almost before he knew it, Tom Metcalf was pouring into Granny Whitlock's ear a tale which, though told in a hundred different ways, always ends the same, apart from the Divine Mercy.

"I can give it to you in a nutshell," said the man, "but the burden of it has become unbearable. Twenty years ago I was mixed up with some frauds in a certain Institution. Others were mixed up as well, and my share of the stolen money was about one hundred pounds. I came here and set up in business. . . . But you

know the rest of the story. . . . I've tried to get on, and hopelessly failed, as I deserved to do. Often conscience has been urging me to put things right. . . . I've sought relief by attending the house of God, but more often than not I've been driven nearly mad with condemnation whilst in the holy place. . . . And yet I've been unable to remain away. . . . I suppose it's because my old mother used to pray for me. She was a good Christian woman, and so is my dear wife. . . . God forgive me for having to tell such a tale in her hearing. . . ." Here the man broke down, and gave way to a flood of weeping. "And now, unless something happens," went on the carrier when he had become a little calmer, "I feel that I am a lost soul. If I could have made enough money in the business to refund my theft it would have been different. But twenty years of hard trying have worn me down, and the smashing of my motor-van finishes everything. I'm finished. My sin has found me out."

"Listen," said old Granny Whitlock earnestly. "Something is going to happen. You must refund that money at once. But before you do so I want to tell you that, lost and ruined as you are, Jesus Christ came to save you. He paid the price of your sin on the Cross, your fraud included. Do you accept that?"

"Yes, but what about my punishment for the fraud? That's the thing that worries me. . . . I haven't got ten pounds in the whole world."

"Then sell up your home if needs be, and trust God," was the answer. "As others were concerned in the fraud, your duty is to send the hundred pounds to the Institution, with some reasonable interest. Let it go as conscience money. . . . This business never really belonged to you. No wonder you didn't prosper. . . . The old Book says—'He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be as a fool.' . . . Tom Metcalf, I would rather crack stones by the wayside, and have peace with God, than possess all the tainted gold in the world!"

"And so would I," broke in Mrs. Metcalf quietly. Then turning to her husband, and stifling a sob, she said bravely: "Our little home must go, Tom."

But Granny Whitlock was not so sure about this, and as she slowly wended her way home to "Sunny View," her mind was full of questionings as to how she could help her unfortunate neighbours in their difficulty.



# The Diamond Ring



“**Y**OU must take the greatest care of this little packet, Charles. Go straight to Parker’s the jeweller in High Street, and give it into his own hands, and ask him to let you have a receipt for it. It is very valuable, but I entrust it to you because I know you are careful. Mr. Parker knows why I am sending it.”

So Charles Turner, the page-boy at Tregenna Park, started on his two-miles walk into the country town, proud of being thus trusted by his employer, Lady Sherwood. The day was very warm, and after a little time the heat became so great that, while still within the spacious grounds, he was tempted to rest a few minutes under a wide-spreading tree; and as he leaned against its trunk he foolishly took the

packet from his pocket and turned it over in his hands.

The wrapping was of very stiff paper, and as he handled it, the seals gave way, disclosing a crimson morocco case, which his curiosity led him to open. On its white satin lining lay a glittering diamond ring. Turner was trying to put this on when, startled by the sound of approaching footsteps, he let it drop. Down he went on his knees to recover it; but, to his dismay, though there was only short turf around the tree, his anxious search was in vain. For nearly an hour he continued it, till at last, he gave it up in despair.

His case was hopeless indeed! He could not return to his mistress, his trust betrayed, her jewel gone; neither could he seek refuge in the home of his parents with his character thus disgraced. Only one resource was left: to make speed to the seaport near and seek work on some far-going vessel.

★ ★ ★ ★

Years went by, during which no trace was found of the absconded messenger or the lost jewel; and sometimes its owner wondered at her fatal mistake as to her page-boy’s character.

Meanwhile, in a distant colony, Charles Turner found work, and by degrees prosperity, and at length set sail for his native land, confident that his savings would cover the value of the diamond ring, and resolved to seek his former employer and tell his strange story.

Entering Tregenna Park, having learned that Lady Sherwood still was there, he retraced that well-remembered pathway, and stood beside the shady tree. He noticed a curious hollow in the bark, at about the height of his

## The Diamond Ring

shoulder, filled with dead leaves and twigs, and, without thinking, poked them out with the point of his cane till he noticed something like a dew-drop sparkling at the bottom. Putting his finger into the little cavity, he drew forth the lost ring.

Great was the amazement of Lady Sherwood, now a white-haired woman, when the well-dressed stranger proved to be her long-vanished page. Convinced of his dishonesty, she had never expected to see him again, and great was her pleasure on learning that the lad in whom she had put such trust was worthy of it; and, hearing of the loss of the ring and its unexpected discovery, she was even more rejoiced to know that the former page's character was cleared than to recover her precious jewel.

With the money he had brought home, Turner was able to start a profitable business.

This is a true story. What a warning it affords against giving way to little faults! Only a lingering by the

way, and a minute of idle curiosity, cost the boy years of bitter self-reproach, the loss of his reputation, and long and lonely exile from his native land and all whom he loved.

ALICE JANE HOME



Great was the amazement of Lady Sherwood



## “Come and Rest”

IT is our Lord Who speaks to you, and He asks you to come apart and rest awhile with Him.

Rest is very necessary for the body. Even machines have to rest, and the whirr of wheels and the hammering of rivets has to cease awhile from time to time.

“Surely you are not idle to-day,” I said reprovingly to a workman in a Tyneside shipyard during a very busy period. “You worked all Bank Holiday, and yet many men are idle to-day!”

“Can’t help it, Sister. The machines must rest awhile; they have never cooled for months.”

Much more must our own complicated machinery have proper rest if we would keep fit.

But the body may be rested and the soul and mind yet weary and unsatisfied. It is this deeper, greater rest that Jesus would give you, the rest which may be yours even when weary with countless duties and activities. “I will give you rest.” It is the thing our souls crave for in disappointment, sorrow, and anxiety, and He can and will give it.

“The sight of thee rests a body,” said a sufferer once, and the words were indeed the highest compliment; for the true friend and helper is not the

one who feasts and entertains and makes us merry, but the one whose presence gives rest.

The busy toiler in factory and mine and the anxious mother alike need physical rest, and sometimes the illness, when the tired hands are still awhile, is the one chance of quiet. It is wise to take each time of illness as a “retreat,” and, as far as possible, to put away anxieties and worldly affairs,

and take the days and weeks as a real rest. Even when reading the Bible is impossible, the long hours of the night, when there is a little respite from pain and the noises of the day are stilled, may be a time of spiritual refreshment and prayer. Sometimes in illness we learn

### LOVERS' MEETINGS

He used to go to meet her at the hush-time of the day.  
When love and he were wooing her, she did not say them  
“Nay”;  
And thro’ the lanes and pasture-lands where flowers were  
all a-blow  
They wandered down youth’s golden-tide in that dear long  
ago.

In after years she met him at the little cottage-gate,  
When he who earned the daily bread would ride in kingly  
state,  
The old horse ambling slowly. But, with Baby on his knee,  
In all the summer countryside no prouder Dad than he!

And now she sits and dreams away the twilight of her  
life—  
For sixty years the two had shared earth’s happiness and  
strife—  
And when at last she passes on, we may be very sure  
“Her man” will wait to welcome her with rapture at  
Heaven’s door!

HILARY BROWN

the wonder of wordless prayer when the soul speaks to God and God to the soul without any definite form of words. Just to rest in God and lean on His strong love—that is rest and peace.

Rest-times have their own danger too. The bent bow is apt to relax too far; the lack of routine may cause some carelessness and sin. We need God in times of pleasure and holiday as much as when the whirr of wheels and the dust of the town deafen and choke us.

The purpose of all rest is to prepare for future effort.

ELLEN CALLINAN



# LIGHT IN THE HOME

NO. 44, NEW SERIES

AUGUST, 1925



**The Village Blacksmith**

"And children running home from school  
Look in at the open door."

*Registered at the General Post Office, London, for transmission by Canadian and Newfoundland Magazine Post*



# A Devout Sceptic

THE devout sceptic of whom we write lived in Northern Palestine. His early years were spent in a pretty village, built in terraces amidst gardens and groves, on the western side of a hill. In the morning he watched the sun climbing over the hill-top, and in the evening saw it disappear beyond the heights of Mount Carmel. To the south of the village was a valley made fertile by a stream that flowed through it.

Though a secluded little town it was not many miles from one of the world's chief highways, along which passed merchantmen with camels laden with the produce of far-off climes, and devout pilgrims who prayed for the peace of Jerusalem and had their faces set towards it. Many travellers passed this man's home on the way from Samaria and Nazareth, to the towns on the shore of the beautiful Sea of Galilee.

Thus, while he had the benefits of a country life, he had ample opportunity to keep himself informed of many remarkable events that were making history in the great world beyond the hills that surrounded his home.

In common with the rest of his countrymen, he mourned the fact that they had been forced to yield unwilling obedience to a military power from the far West, and secretly fumed and fretted as he saw the Roman eagles carried by the army of occupation. Like the rest of his nation, he hoped and prayed for the coming of one who should free them from foreign tyranny, and once again establish them in the position of glory amid world empires that had been their portion in former generations.

Of late this aspiration, that had been fed by contemplation of ancient prophecy, received fresh stimulus, and the smouldering light was kindled to a flame.

Beyond the River Jordan, members of all ranks in society were crowding to hear a unique open-air preacher.

Rugged and uncompromising, he ruthlessly rebuked his hearers and urged them to prepare with all speed possible for the coming of God's Messiah, by repentance and reformation; since He, who Malachi had said should suddenly come to His temple, was following hard upon the heels of the messenger.

News of these things had doubtless reached the ears of our "devout sceptic." That he was devout seems clear from the fact that our Lord specially mentions that He saw him "under

the fig tree." To an Englishman that may have no particular significance, but to a Jew it suggested religious devotion. It was under the shade of a tree that they were accustomed to retire for meditation and prayer in order to obtain the quietness and seclusion that was not afforded by their primitive houses.

Among this man's circle of friends was one named Philip, a native of a town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. He had been among the crowds that were so remarkably moved by the things happening beyond the Jordan.

One day he startled his friend by interrupting his meditations with the excited exclamation: "We have found Him about whom Moses in the Law wrote, as well as the Prophets—Jesus, the son of Joseph, a man of Nazareth."

Philip had not been long acquainted with Jesus, but he was eager to tell what he knew. He had yet much to learn, and in one particular his statement was inaccurate, for our Lord was not the Son of Joseph, though such was commonly reported by the ill-informed. Better by far, however, a blundering speaker, with warm and loving heart, ready to tell of God's doing, than the chilling silence that too often seals our lips.

If you know anything of the saving power of Christ in your life, my reader, do not wait till you know all, but

Go home and tell to those you love  
How Christ hath set you free:  
The wondrous change which grace hath wrought  
Let all your neighbours see.

Go forth and tell to those around  
That He can meet their need,  
That 'twas for them He came to earth,  
On Calvary to bleed.

Philip's brief exclamation told of hope satisfied and prophecy fulfilled, but he met with a rebuff. Nathaniel asked sceptically, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Strictly speaking, a sceptic is not a disbeliever, but a thoughtful, reflective person; one who doubts, or hesitates to believe. Such a nature is by no means evil. Some folks are like sponge, quickly absorbing any new idea, and as quickly losing it under a little pressure. Such seem to be "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Others are like trees, drinking in the truth slowly, but what they

## A Devout Sceptic

receive becomes part of the fibre of their being.

This man was one of the latter type. His doubts were not without reason. He was familiar with Nazareth; it was only four miles distant from his home at Cana. It was a place of ill-repute, and what little we know of the inhabitants is not creditable to them.

He was by no means the last man to judge a person by his surroundings and to be mistaken in so doing.

Fair white water-lilies flourish in muddy ponds while reflecting heavenly sunlight, and many fair and fragrant lives are bearing daily witness for God in city slums, and obscure places of the earth.

Philip's reply was as brief as it was practical; he invited his friend to "Come and see."

Is there not even yet far too much time wasted in dealing with lesser problems, before dealing with the great problem of Christ, and our relationship to Him?

Nathaniel was an honest sceptic, ready to believe when due evidence was set before him. The greatest Christian evidence both was, and

is to-day, Christ Himself. Faced with Him the heart and head of this devout sceptic were both captured. Yielding allegiance he cried: "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art King."

Some *will* not believe, but like Nelson at the Battle of Copenhagen, put the telescope to a blind eye and say, "I see no signal."

Others are genuinely perplexed, and deserve our sympathy. These would do well to leave for a while their doubts regarding the Old Testament or their difficulties about differences between Christian denominations, or the inconsistent conduct of professing Christians.

First, prayerfully read the story presented in the four Gospels, note the offers and claims made by the One of whom they tell.

Ask yourself whether there can be any reasonable explanation of Christ's life on earth except that He was the Son of God.

Deal honestly with God and your own heart, and be ready to follow the light that comes to you, and we do not fear the result.

Other matters are important, but they can wait till this most important matter has been settled.

PERCY LAKE

## The Village Blacksmith

UNDER a spreading chestnut-tree  
The village smithy stands;  
The smith, a mighty man is he,  
With large and sinewy hands;  
And the muscles of his brawny arms  
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,  
His face is like the tan;  
His brow is wet with honest sweat,  
He earns whate'er he can,  
And looks the whole world in the face,  
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,  
You can hear his bellows blow;  
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,  
With measured beat and slow,  
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,  
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school  
Look in at the open door;  
They love to see the flaming forge,  
And hear the bellows roar,  
And catch the burning sparks that fly  
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,  
And sit among his boys;  
He hears the parson pray and preach,  
He hears his daughter's voice,  
Singing in the village choir,  
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,  
Singing in Paradise!  
He needs must think of her once more,  
How in the grave she lies;  
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes  
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling—rejoicing—sorrowing,  
Onward through life he goes;  
Each morning sees some task begun,  
Each evening sees its close;  
Something attempted, something done,  
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,  
For the lesson thou hast taught!  
Thus at the flaming forge of life  
Our fortunes must be wrought;  
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped  
Each burning deed and thought!

H. W. LONGFELLOW



# Some One Cares

By ELEANOR CLARE



MARGARET MILES machined by an open window facing a beautiful sea-view; but the sailing boats clustered round the coast, the gay-coloured yachts, and grey caves rising up against a deep-blue sky held no beauty for her. She would have liked to shut the window, for the merry laughter of the children playing on the beach disturbed her.

She would have shut it, but for Mrs. Rand's reproachful look the previous day when she caught her in the attempt: "It isn't as if any one can see you, dearie," she had said. "The bit of garden hides the parlour; and the sea-breeze'll do you good."

Margaret was grateful for the kind thought; nevertheless, a bright tear glistened on the blue bodice that was guided by her delicate fingers. The loneliness of her life seemed, sometimes, more than she could bear. She had no recollection of her mother, who had passed away when she was a child; but her father had been mother and father to her.

The tears fell thick and fast as she traced step by step her father's illness, her visits to the hospital; then his sudden death after an operation. All that had happened nearly a year ago, but her grief was as fresh now as it was then. She dwelt so much upon it. Then, feeling the uselessness of giving way, she dried her tears, determined to get the dress finished by to-morrow, Saturday.

Mrs. Rand's heart had gone out to the little dressmaker. "Miss Miles is very much run down," wrote her sister from London, "and is not equal to much work. The doctor has ordered her away, and, although she has enough to pay for the journey, she certainly cannot afford lodgings at the seaside."

So Mrs. Rand had offered board and lodging to Margaret during the month of August, in exchange for two hours' sewing a day. She had always admired the way her sister's dresses were made.

Mrs. Rand's son had come home on leave just a few days after Margaret's arrival. He had not expected to see the parlour turned into a "rag shop," he remarked one day at dinner. But Margaret's eyes were on her plate; she had not noticed the good-humoured smile directed towards her. Unfortunately his mother either had not heard his remark or did not think it necessary to explain that it was a joke. But it made the sensitive girl feel in the way.

The monotonous whirr of the sewing-machine, as well as the noise outside, deadened a knock. So the door was opened; and a young man with a close-cropped dark head and good features came in.

He was gazing at the sweet, sad face bent over the work when the draught caused her to look up. There stood Charlie Rand with his tunic in one hand and a button in the other.

Margaret smiled. "You want me to stitch that button on?" she asked, taking the tunic.

He grinned sheepishly.

A long blue garment, containing white tacking threads, occupied the most comfortable chair by the window. So Charlie Rand lifted the garment carefully and carried it like a baby to another chair. Well pleased with himself he sat down and watched Miss Miles, aghast at the rapidity with which she stitched on that button. He was about to tell her that she was stitching it on quicker than it had taken him to pull it off; that, in fact, he had pulled it off as an excuse to have a chat, as his mother said that Margaret must not be disturbed unnecessarily. But he couldn't somehow.

Margaret's simple black frock showed up the pallor of her skin, and the pathetic droop of her upper lip made the joke fall flat. He liked the few stray curls falling about her temples, but he wished—how he wished!—she didn't look so sad.

"I'd like to see you look happier," he said.

## Some One Cares

He drew a cigarette case from his pocket, and proceeded to light one. She looked up with a faint smile. But he knew she had been crying, for her blue eyes had the brightness of recently shed tears. He yearned to comfort her.

"I saw you in church on Sunday; and mother told me you were there in the morning, too! Religion's the only comfort for any one in trouble; but, of course, you know that, so it's hardly the thing for me to say."

Margaret looked vaguely at him—watched him while he flicked the ash of his cigarette out of the window. She had gone to church because she was in the habit of going. Thought of consolation never entered her head. She placed the tunic on the arm of his chair. He didn't seem inclined to go, so she picked up a dress-skirt that needed repairing.

"Is that old rag mother's?"

"Yes!" replied Margaret with a smile. She was examining the contents of a bag containing bits of material. "Here's a piece exactly the same!"

"Yes; but this is new! It'll tear away the old! 'No man puts a piece of new cloth upon an old garment; for that'll only make matters worse.' You'll find that philosophy in that Book there," pointing towards the Bible on a shelf in the recess.

"We used to talk about that sort of thing at the Front," he went on gravely. "You'd be surprised what a lot of chaps didn't understand that Parable. But our Lord makes it clear that He cannot work with a half-hearted dis-

ciple. A half-hearted Christian is no good at all, either to himself or to any one else."

Margaret gazed wide-eyed at him, her needle poised in air. She had never even given a thought as to what it meant. At school, it had seemed to her to refer to the people to whom Christ spoke when He was on earth; now Mr. Rand was talking as if it meant the very work she was doing—and her own character.

She was very much surprised. But while she listened she forgot to sew.

"I'd better be off!" he said at last; "or mother'll say I'm wasting your time."

When he shut the door behind him Margaret returned to her work. There was something of reverence in the action as she put the piece of new grey material back into the bag, for she was thinking of the parable so clearly explained by Mr. Rand. It set her thinking.

She cut a piece of stuff from an inner fold of



"I care; mother cares; the One who has taken your father cares"



## Some One Cares

the old garment, and when Mrs. Rand came in to see if she had nearly finished for the night she showed it to her, and explained that new material would have torn away the old, just as it says in Scripture.

"Yes; wonderful! Isn't it?" Mrs. Rand replied. "The soul's got to be ready—in the right state to receive the word, or it's of no use. I heard a preacher say something like that once. But, now, put away your work! Supper's ready."

Afterwards Charlie took her to the pier, and she saw for the first time a liner in the distance, with all her ports lit up; and she could see stars through thin wisps of clouds. It was all very wonderful, just to sit there on the pier so quiet and happy by his side, and watch people walk to and fro and listen to the band.

Her companion was thinking of a letter that had arrived from his aunt. It referred to Margaret: of how she dwelt too much on her loneliness; and her morbid state of mind.

"Get the idea out of your head that no one cares for you," he said, gently, when they walked homewards. "I care; mother cares; and the One Who has taken your father cares."

"How can *He* care, to have left me lonely like this?" she cried plaintively.

"But *He* cares most of all! *He's* done it for some good reason." He stopped to emphasise his words: "Now, listen. Mother, hearing of your sorrow, immediately wanted to help you." Margaret nodded emphatically. "Then how strange it is to think that while a human friend can do so much for us, *He* 'in Whom we live and move' can do nothing. It's ridiculous!"

"Oh! You!" she murmured, with deep emotion.

"There! don't cry, little girl. Everything'll work round all right in the end——"

"I'm not crying! Look at me!" He looked: but he saw no tears; only two shining eyes and a little quivering mouth beneath the close-fitting hat. He yearned to take her in his arms. "You know so much! You understand so much! Oh! how is it you understand?"

He was silent for a while, then he said, earnestly:

"I don't think any of us chaps who went through 1914 to 1918 out there are quite the same as we were, though we may not say much about it. I wouldn't talk to you now like this—it's not my way—only I can't bear to see you sad. It worries mother, too."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that for the world!" she said quickly.

He smiled, having gained his point, and they walked along in silence until they reached the gate.

"Here's mother waiting for us!"

Margaret lay awake a long while thinking of all that had been said. Her prayers that night came direct from her heart. It was then that she realised how half-hearted they had been before; and when at last she closed her eyes for sleep a wonderful peace stole over her.

The letter from Charlie Rand's aunt had also contained the news that it was Margaret's birthday the following Sunday. His aunt had discovered the date in a book that Margaret had lent her. So much discussion went on in the kitchen on the Saturday morning while Margaret finished the blue frock in the parlour. Then all sewing was to be put away for the weekend.

After dinner Mrs. Rand came in to try on the dress, and her son was so pleased with it that she said she would keep it on, as his leave would soon be up. Then, with a mysterious smile, Mrs. Rand unfastened the parcel she had placed on the chair when she entered. She drew from the folds of tissue-paper some beautiful white material.

"This is for you, dearie, from Charlie and me, wishing you many happy returns of the day—to-morrow. Charlie wants you to wear a bit of white now."

She kissed the girl affectionately as she noticed the rosy flush dye her cheek at mention of his name.

"How did you know it was my birthday to-morrow?" she exclaimed, gazing admiringly at the silk. "How beautiful it is! I'll soon run up a jumper on the machine and put it on to-morrow."

"A happy new year, Margaret! You begin your new year to-morrow, you know?" said young Rand. "Oh! what a lot of to-morrows!"

"I hope you will have a happy new year too," she laughed, rather bewildered at all that was happening.

"That depends on you, little girl?" was the tender reply. "I'll tell you what I mean when you've got that jumper on."

But his loving glance told Margaret that without waiting.

# Jack Whitby's Return

MISS THORNTON sat in her private sitting-room at the Boys' Institute and tried to write a letter ; but such a noise was going on in the Recreation Room that she found it difficult to collect her thoughts. Lately, several very rough lads had joined their number, and although the matron longed to help them, yet she was beginning to fear that their influence on the other boys for evil would far outweigh any good that they themselves might receive.

"I wonder if I did right in letting them join us," she mused. "Such rough material!—and yet I oughtn't to despair of them ; but Jack Whitby—he's really incorrigible!"

Just then Miss Thornton happened to glance up at a little bookshelf over her desk, on which stood a small bust of her favourite composer, Handel. But her thoughts were not with the musician ; she was thinking of the sculptor who had so perfectly moulded that massive head and those broad shoulders. Once there had been nothing but a rough, soiled and shapeless mass of marble. But the sculptor had seen possibilities in it, had brought chisel and hammer to bear upon that unsightly block, and this was the result !

"And have I any right to despair of one of these uncouth boys?" thought Miss Thornton, "when the Great Sculptor is able to conform even such into His own image? No, I must go on praying for them. Nothing is impossible with God."

A loud crash interrupted her reverie, and rising to her feet, the letter unfinished, she hastened down the corridor to the room from whence the noise proceeded. Opening the door, she saw an overturned table, a broken chair, two boys struggling on the floor, others standing round, jeering, laughing, applauding, while magazines, draughtsmen and snap-cards strewed the floor ! The matron had also noticed that, as she entered, three of the lads had escaped through a further door, and now she could see them racing down the street.

"Bob Darking, Len Brown—and Jack Whitby," thought Miss Thornton. "I fancy they'll never come back again, and a good thing too, perhaps!"

It was some time before order was restored, and in tidying the room it was found that a new packet of snap-cards was missing, the

matron feeling quite certain that the culprit was one of the boys who had made off.

Later she returned to her room, with a heavy heart, and went on with her unfinished letter. But again her glance travelled to the bust on the shelf, and again she resolved not to lose heart. That night, and for some time to come, Miss Thornton prayed even more earnestly for her boys, and especially for the three black sheep that had escaped her care. But there seemed to be little to encourage her, and often she felt tempted to lessen her prayers on their behalf.

Then, late one evening, there was a gentle ring at the front door bell, and the matron went herself to answer it. It was growing dusk, and for the moment Miss Thornton fancied that the neatly dressed youth who stood before her was a stranger. Then she looked again. Could it be Jack Whitby? Yes, it was!

"Might I speak to you a minute, miss?" he said.

Miss Thornton welcomed her visitor into her room and asked him to sit down. Instead, looking very uncomfortable, he stood turning his cap round and round in his hands.

"I'm glad to see you again, Jack," said the matron kindly. "What is it that you want to speak to me about?"

"Well, miss," said the lad, "do you mind, some months ago, how me and two other chaps runned away from here? and didn't you miss a pack of snap-cards after we was gone—they new ones?"

"Yes, I did," said Miss Thornton gently.

"Well, miss, I knows the fellow what took them. I ain't agoing to split on him, no fear, but—I want to *pay* for them cards."

"It is nice of you to want to do it, Jack," Miss Thornton replied, "but really I couldn't allow it, as you didn't take them yourself; and after all, they only cost a shilling."

But Jack fumbled in his pocket, and pushing a shilling on to the table, he made clumsily for the door.

"Stop a minute Jack, won't you?" said his friend. "Come and sit down here by me and tell me how you have been getting on. And Jack," she added, "isn't there something behind all this? Is it, Jack, that you have become a Christian?"

The lad fidgetted and gazed out of the window. Then, looking straight into Miss Thornton's eyes,



## Jack Whitby's Return

he said, "No, matron, but I should *like* to be one."

A serious talk followed, and Miss Thornton found that her visitor was really in earnest. Before he left, the two knelt in prayer, and Jack—who had seemed such a disappointment, yielded his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor was this all. Obtaining work in his native village in South Wales, Jack Whitby soon became a power for good among the young men of that place. Uniting himself with a Christian Church, so aglow was he with love for Christ, and so great was his power in prayer,

that, through the working of the Holy Spirit, a great revival broke out in the neighbourhood; Christians were strengthened, and many wanderers brought into the Good Shepherd's fold.

"I will never again despair of any soul," said Miss Thornton to herself, glancing, as she so often did, at the bust above her head. "Jack Whitby was indeed a rough piece of marble, and as hard, but the Great Sculptor, to Whom he has yielded, has taken him in hand, and is even now conforming him into His own image,"

MARY ALISON



# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village  
by Amos E. Denner

## The Butter Factory

WITH the advent of the motor-car, Moortor and its rugged moorland surroundings gradually became known to the larger world beyond its borders.

The call of the Open Road had been heard, and in their journeyings forth not a few city people counted themselves fortunate to have "discovered" the old-fashioned little village nestling so peacefully away from the beaten track of commerce and bustling activity.

Of course, there were a few who judged Moortor to be dreadfully dull and monotonous, but to the majority, the little place resting in the sweet silences, and set with quaint thatched

cottages in gardens ablaze with old-world floral beauty, was just a little dream-spot, pure and simple, and the charm of it was irresistible.

This latter experience explained why Mr. William Groves, after one or two visits to Moortor, decided to invest his capital in an experiment unique in the history of the village, and to start a concern which was afterwards to be known as the "West-land Butter Factory."

And, as it is an accepted ruling in the business world that, in the end, "quality always tells," it is not to be wondered at that in an incredibly short time demands for the excellent commodity known as "Moortor Heather Brand Butter" became more and more insistent.

It so happened that it was the proprietor of the butter factory whose car had been in collision with Carrier Tom Metcalf's motor-van; an event, which, as already seen, had set the seal to something of a mental and spiritual crisis in the unfortunate carrier's life.

Of course, Mr. Groves knew nothing of this. The affair, in so far as he was concerned, had been dismissed from his mind as an act of care-

## Moortor Folk

lessness on the part of a man who should have known better than to have been driving on the wrong side of the road.

\* \* \* \*

The establishment of the butter factory naturally meant the opportunity for several Moortor inhabitants to increase their means of livelihood through obtaining employment at the place. The rate of pay was good, and, in addition to their regular wage, each employee was allowed a half-pound of butter per week as an extra.

All went well, and the workers were quite content with their lot. One day, however, a large and unexpected demand for butter from a firm whose contract had been long sought, caused the usual gift to the employees to be temporarily checked.

Then the cloven hoof appeared, or in other words, this was the opportunity which Ned Payne the shoemaker had been fervently awaiting, in order to convert the "toiling masses" of the village to a "system" which would mean, not only unlimited supplies of free butter, but of beer also.

Accordingly, when the "cease work" bell sounded one bright sunset, the thirty odd employees of the butter factory were more or less amused by the sight of their self-constituted "champion" perched on a fallen tree-trunk just outside the building. He was all set and ready for a "factory-gate meeting," as he smugly termed it.

"Fellow workmates," he began, as soon as the advance party of employees drew near, "how long are you going to tolerate the iniquitous grip of capitalism upon your throats? Here's one of those bloated grinders of labour, he comes along and gets you to drain your very life-blood, just to swell his bursting money-bags with the pure sweat of your noble brows, and——"

"Gone balmy, cobbler?" inquired one of a group of men who had at that moment come along, "or has something bit you? Which?"

"Something's bit you, my friend," retaliated the orator, apparently pleased with himself at being able to retort so smartly. "Yes, something's bit you mighty hard, and unless you take care that something will swallow you right up."

"You can do a bit of swallowing yourself, I fancy," shouted another in the little crowd, and this remark was greeted with a round of laughter from the rest.

"Here's this so-called employer," went on the cobbler, ignoring the interruption as well

as possible; "what does he do? . . . What does he do, I ask?"

"More in five minutes than you do in five years," was the reply that fell on Ned Payne's ears, and at sound of this, the cobbler seemed to become uncomfortable, for it was the voice of old Granny Whitlock. The old lady had caught sight of the "meeting" from her garden gate, and had strolled up, just to see what it was all about.

"As I was observing," continued Ned Payne, keeping an eye on his latest arrival: "what this so-called employer of labour does is to take the butter from your mouths—the butter that you have had every week. . . 'Tis only the beginning; mark my words. He'll take the very bread from your mouths too, if you don't watch it. See how artful he is in driving in the thin end of the wedge, and——"

"You gawmless mortal," said Granny Whitlock, moving nearer to the cobbler. "Fancy you perched up there, prating such twaddle about folk being artful who drive in the thin end of a wedge. What is there artful about *that*? 'Tis only fools who are senseless enough to try to drive in the thick end—just like you are doing to-day. . . Get off that tree this minute, and stop insulting our Mr. Groves. He's a good man, and a fair man. Your wife was only telling me this morning that you have run up a tidy bill for butter with him. . . Same old game there as everywhere else, except at the Heather Bell, where they seem to have more sense than to trust you. . . And as for your hint about the people's butter being stopped. . . Well, all these folks knew 'twas a gift. And look here, Mr. Windbag, every one of the work people has had extra money in the place of the gift, although they're not fools enough to tell you that—like I am. . . I'm only telling you just to stop your silly clap-trap. . . You leave Mr. Groves alone. . . He's a gentleman and——"

"Seems like it, by the way he treated Carrier Metcalf over the smashing of his van," interrupted the cobbler, a grin of triumph overspreading his face at thought of scoring a good point. "If this wonderful 'Bible-puncher' would only do his duty to his fellowman, then the carrier wouldn't be like to go out of his mind just now."

But Ned Payne got no further with his meeting that day, for the next moment the old lady had rushed towards him with her upraised stick.

"If you don't get off that perch I'll make your



## Moortor Folk

bones ache," she exclaimed threateningly. "Fie on you, Ned Payne! standing there and talking about your neighbour like that. We don't want that sort of advertising of our *decent* neighbour's troubles in Moortor. Get down at once, or I'll dust that jacket of yours better than it's been dusted for a long day."

"That's it, Granny, give him beans!" shouted some one in the crowd. "Go on! Take it out of him!" But there was no need for further exhortations, because, for once in his life, Ned Payne thought discretion was the better part of valour, and jumping down from the tree-trunk he shuffled away, amidst a parting volley of jeers and amused guffaws from the villagers.

\* \* \* \*

All unknown to the rest of the company, Mr. Groves himself had been an amused and interested spectator of the comedy at the factory gate, and when the last straggler from the "meeting" had gone away, he quietly betook

himself to "Sunny View" for one of those chats with Granny Whitlock which, since his advent in Moortor, had grown increasingly profitable.

"I've called to thank you for being such a doughty champion of my unworthy self," he said smilingly, as the old lady dusted a spotless chair for him. "I was behind the bushes just now, and it was a wonder that you could not feel my blushes at the way you sang my praises in the ears of the work-people, and especially in the presence of that remarkable shoemaker."

Granny Whitlock broke into a hearty laugh.

"'Twas a bit amusing, I must admit," she remarked pleasantly; "but, of course, you don't take that cobbler seriously. He's a lazy lubboon, with a bee in his bonnet."

"Ah, that reminds me," said Mr. Groves eagerly. "I heard Ned Payne make a reference to Carrier Metcalf. . . . Something to the effect



"I've called to thank you for being such a doughty champion of my unworthy self"

## Moortor Folk

that the man was likely to go out of his mind. And from what I could gather, this had something to do with the event of a fortnight ago, when the man smashed up his van through his own careless driving. Fortunately my own car was going slow, otherwise there would have been a couple of funerals in Moortor by now. . . . But, tell me: is there any foundation for Ned Payne's assertion that the carrier is going wrong in his head over this affair? The man seems usually a good enough chap. . . . Always willing and ready when I have given him any little jobs to do."

Surely, it was not by chance that at that moment there flashed into Granny Whitlock's mind some words from the old Book which she had that very morning been reading. They were the words of Jesus to His disciples concerning the removal even of a mountain. . . . If they only had faith, He said . . . "Nothing shall be impossible unto you."

And ever since the old lady had come away from the carrier's home, after listening to the man's distressing story of his vain attempt to prosper on stolen money, she had been seeking guidance as to how to help this now-penitent soul. . . . Now. . . . "Nothing shall be impossible unto you."

And because the old saint felt so confident that this unsought-for inquiry concerning the carrier was so obviously the working out of God's gracious purpose, she did a thing she had never done before, and dared to tell Mr. Groves the whole of the story that had been breathed into her ear by Thomas Metcalf.

Nor was Granny Whitlock mistaken in so doing, for after hearing her

story Mr. Groves came handsomely to the carrier's rescue in his financial difficulties. The only condition he made about this was its absolute secrecy, and that Granny Whitlock herself should take the money to Tom Metcalf as a gift "from a fellow-sinner saved by grace."

Moortor people have long since ceased to speak of Thomas Metcalf as "going soft." The carrier's business suddenly seemed to take on an era of prosperity. Villagers said it was the long-delayed reward of the man's hard efforts, but those in the know thank God for the privilege of bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ. And by this means one man, at least, in Moortor has learnt how the more courageously to bear his own burden.

### THE DARKEST HOUR

When life its lowest ebb has reached  
With pain and care surrounded,  
Think not that all thy coming days  
By bleak despair are bounded.

Life's sweetest moments follow close  
Upon life's deepest sorrows,  
And following the darkest hour  
Are surely bright to-morrows.

EUNICE INGILBY

## Thoughts for Thinkers

### Exempted

AN American paper gives a list of those who may legitimately refuse to help the cause of Missions:

Those who believe the world is not lost and does not need a Saviour.

Those who believe that Jesus Christ made a mistake when He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Those who believe the Gospel is not the power of God, and cannot save the heathen.

Those who wish that missionaries had never come to our ancestors, and that we ourselves were still heathen.

Those who believe that it is "every man for himself" in this world, and who, with Cain, ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Those who want no share in the final victory.

Those who believe that they are not accountable to God for the money entrusted to them.

Those who are prepared to accept the final

sentence: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, . . . ye did it not to Me."

### How to Live

The fact is, life is a hazardous business. That is the kind of discipline God has put us into. But God calls us to live our lives in trust and confidence, and hopeful expectation, not in fear and dread. Why live in the mood of always expecting the worst? We walk in the midst of risks and dangers, but happy are they who go forward day by day in strong confidence in the goodness of the universe, who hold that faithful living of the life of love leads to a happy issue, and who expect to find that happy issue some way, somewhere, in God's good time. Mrs. Browning voiced the thought in beautiful words:

"And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed  
around our incompleteness,  
Round our restlessness, His rest."





# PICTURES FROM AFAR

By L. B. Paull

## Medical Work

**I**N a little village in China there is a small hospital run by two English doctors. It did not take them long to establish a great reputation, as their methods contrasted very favourably with the skill (so called) of the native practitioner. This will be seen by the following incident.

A young man, prostrate with pain, sent for the local medicine-man. He came with great pomp and display, but the only "cure" he could suggest was to slash the patient severely round the neck and shoulders so that his attention might be drawn away from the original ailment. No wonder then that the little hospital, run on English lines, was talked about in many homes, and that young and old closed the doors of those homes and tramped over hills and dreary lengths of stony ground in the hope of being cured.

They formed about the door in a queue, very patient as the Chinese always are, waiting and waiting for their turn to come.

"You cannot be seen at all to-day," said the weary house-boy from the shadow of the doorway.

Very well, they would sit down on the grass. And there they remained for two, and even three days. But further disappointment awaited them.

"You cannot be seen at all," was the message now given by the house-boy; "the young doctors are both worn out, they get no rest day or night."

Without a word, still patient, the people turned away, to begin the long tramp back to their homes, their fondest hopes unfulfilled. Do we wonder that when missionaries see these things they turn astonished eyes to Christian lands wondering why it is that more doctors are not sent out, and that larger funds are not forthcoming?

The following extract is from Wuchang:

"We have got a little Medical Committee going here. One of the third-year students is secretary, and the head servant who is supposed to bring me any of the servants who are ill, and who cleans the dispensary, and provides me most faithfully at the appointed times with boiling water, is also a member. The Day-school master is also on the Committee, and he is gradually getting hold of the idea that he must look after the children's bodies as well as their minds. We have had one very pathetic case brought in lately: a tiny laddie with a terrible place just over his larynx. His father had squeezed the abscess and then stuck on some filthy black Chinese ointment. It was a fight to keep the sore from going inwards, which would have been fatal just there. The father refused to allow him to remain in hospital after the first few days, so he became an out-patient, coming each morning to the dispensary, sobbing with pain, though between his sobs, being the little gentleman he was, he assured me that my medicine was very good.

"The daily dressings take a long time. The cook's man, who stirs the rice-pot, is a poor old fellow with varicose veins. In addition to that he once got into some quick-lime and all his skin is black, with no healing power. He scalded his feet some three weeks ago, and with all these previous troubles healing seems almost impossible. Poor old chap! He can't afford to leave off working, and it would need a rest of many weeks before any real change could take place. In the meantime I dress his legs each morning, but there is small improvement. One day he scratched his ankle and I gave him a good scolding, but he replied, 'If you itch, what can you do but scratch?' The boy who was helping me suggested that we should cut his nails, so with a great pair of blunt Chinese scissors he set to work, the poor old man hanging his head like a naughty child."

Malaria, which seems to make itself felt in every country, often attacks the school-children. "They turn very white, and the next stage will be a shivering fit which sets their teeth



## Pictures from Afar

chattering, and then at the same time each day the attack comes on with high fever. It is of no use to give them medicine then; but when the fever goes down the missionaries have done much for them through doses of quinine. The poor diet the children have, consisting of rice, a few vegetables, and clover gathered from the fields, is very much against them, so the best thing to do for them is to tone up the system by means of a tonic. All this everyday detail seems at times far from the Kingdom of God. It seems impossible to overstep the barrier of the flesh and get at these people's souls. The first thing to do seems to be to make them, physically as fit and as comfortable as we can to face the awful odds of life."

So the account ends. But is not this the way the Master would choose? "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto Me."

### Chinese Feasts

An invitation to a Chinese feast can create some dismay on the part of a missionary. He knows it is wise to accept such invitations because it promotes friendship, and often gives him an introduction into family life. But he knows also that the strict code of Chinese etiquette forbids him to leave one morsel on his plate, however distasteful the food may be.

In this matter the missionary differs from other white men who go out for purposes of trade. If they attend feasts and do not like the food they leave it, even if by so doing they offend their host and hostess. "If they give us such stuff," said one, "they jolly well deserve to be so treated." But the missionary cannot say that; he is not his own master. He knows that if he offends he can never win these people for the service of Christ.

My daughter and her husband were invited to the house of some wealthy people who wished to celebrate the second birthday of their baby. The evening was to begin with a feast, and the table was laid for about twenty guests. No forks or spoons are used, but by the side of each visitor is placed a small case containing chopsticks.

Chopsticks are like two white bone knitting needles, and the Chinese, who have used them from early childhood, become very skilful in managing them. But not so the missionaries! Many a missionary's wife has found herself wishing that she had left her best dress at home.

The first course on this occasion consisted of

grilled sea-slugs. It was followed by bunches of garlic fried in batter. Then a more important dish was brought round containing small squares of pork fat, just warm, heaped up in profusion.

In vain the English guests looked round for rice, or bread, to lend solidity to the untempting mass; it must be eaten as it was without anything added to it. This, and the fact that it was almost impossible to convey such slippery stuff to the mouth with safety, completed their sense of discomfort. A bowl of rice was the last item, but it seemed to come too late, though, as some one suggested, it might help to keep the rest down.

A friend of ours was telling us of a similar experience which came to him. Two large spoonfuls of something, he knew not what, was put upon his plate. It made him feel rather sick, but he struggled manfully through it. As his eyes rested on the empty plate he gave a sigh of relief. Unfortunately at that moment he happened to say something about his father, who was a missionary in a neighbouring town.

"Oh," said the host, "you must have another spoonful in honour of your father."

The helping was a plentiful one and he faced it with many misgivings. He said afterwards, "You may be sure I said nothing about my mother; it was the only time in all my life that I heartily wished that I had been an orphan."

My daughter and her husband remained after the feast for the celebration of the baby's birthday. The large dining table was cleared and all round it were placed articles such as the following—parchments, a bunch of pens, books (including sometimes a Bible), scissors, keys, etc. The baby was placed in the middle of the table, the father and mother and relatives watching with breathless interest, for they believe that whatever the baby first lays hold of will indicate his trade or profession in later life. As the romance of China is its learning (it certainly has no love romance), some parents push the books or parchments in front of the baby; but it not infrequently happens that the obdurate infant lays hold of the scissors because they are bright.

In paying afternoon calls the missionary's wife is not without her trials. A small meal is prepared for the caller, consisting generally of three poached eggs which have been cooked in water so sweet as to be like sugar itself. The eggs are placed on a plate, covered with the sweetened water, and then offered to the visitor, who must somehow swallow them while the hostess, who does not join in the meal, looks on. It must also be borne in mind that no morsel must be left!



## “I See it Now”

THE sun was very hot that August afternoon as John Fisher walked up the village street where, some sixty years before, he was born. He was enjoying a short holiday much needed, for his work as City Missionary in London was hard and exacting. The quiet and pure air was a tonic to the tired worker, but he was not too tired to be on the look-out for some little seed-sowing for the Master.

John Fisher was shown a house where he could get accommodation for the few days he meant to spend there. When he got inside the house he saw it was the very same that had been his home years before, and memory was busy as he looked around and thought of his happy childhood's days.

The next day, as the visitor was walking up the street, he met an old man who stopped him with these words on his lips :

“ Ah ! I knew your father well a goodish time ago ; come and see me, that we may have a talk over old days.”

This the missionary was glad to do, and each day he turned into the little cottage close to the forge to have a chat with old Joe.

One day the old man said to his visitor with a sigh, “ I have been very ill, I am close on seventy years old and I feel I am growing weaker every day. Before long I shall die ; I have a sort of feeling that I shall be gone in eight months' time.”

“ But you are not afraid, are you ? ” the city missionary asked.

In a low voice poor old Joe answered, “ Yes, I *am* afraid.”

“ But,” said the visitor, “ you have been a religious man all your life ; your father was parish clerk.”

“ Yes,” Joe answered, “ that's the trouble ; I have had *religion*, but not real godliness, and now it is failing me.”

“ Joe,” said John Fisher, “ give me your Bible.”

After a great deal of searching and dusting the Bible was brought. Turning to 1 John i. 9, John Fisher read, “ If we confess our sins God is faithful . . . to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“ So you see, Joe, if we confess, God will forgive ; if I do my part will God fail to do His part ? ”

The missionary remained two hours with the old man, reading, talking, and praying, but he did not seem to grasp the teaching. Then taking his leave the visitor said, “ I shall be praying for you, and you will pray too. I will look in to-morrow.”

And this he did. As he opened the kitchen door he saw Joe reading his Bible. Mr. Fisher, taking it from him, opened at Isaiah 55. saying, “ Now read aloud this chapter.” When he came to verse 7 the missionary stopped him, saying, “ Now what does that verse mean ? ”

Joe was a long time before he gave his answer, but when he did it was this : “ Well, it seems to me that if I forsake my sin and turn to God, He will pardon me.”

“ Yes, that is just it ; now let us get on our knees, and you tell God just what you feel, and tell Him you will forsake your sin.”

They knelt in that quiet room, and Joe in broken sentences unfolded the burden of his heart to God. After some little time he rose up saying, “ Thank God I see it now, well ! to think I have never seen it before ! Why, it is all as plain as my Father's Will.”

## "I See it Now"

The missionary stayed two days longer than he had intended in the village, in order to help Joe. Thinking it would be a good thing for the new convert to have a Christian friend who could encourage him, he made inquiries, and finding that the village cobbler was an earnest Christian man he and Joe went to his little shop, and here Joe told him the story of his conversion. The cobbler was so deeply touched that

he closed his front door, and the three had a little praise meeting.

Strange to say, eight months later old Joe passed peacefully away to rest, in sure and certain hope that "all, all was well."

His last days were full of joy lived in the knowledge of pardon through the Blood of Jesus, and looking forward to an eternity of joy in the next world.

LOUISA GOODWIN

## "You ain't got enough Ballast, Bill"

HE was a fine old salt. His sun-burnt face and snow-white hair had been seasoned by many a summer sun and winter's storm.

He sat in a railway carriage opposite me, by his side a basket containing some very large crabs.

"They are fine crabs, dad," said I.

"They are, sir," replied the old man, and, with a tear sparkling in his eye, he continued, "but my boy lost his life in getting on 'em."

"It's like this 'ere," said my new friend. "I had two sons, and they both went out last night to get they crabs. One of 'em says to the t'other, 'Bill, yer ain't got enough ballast in the boat.' 'Yes, I 'ave,' says Bill, and he wouldn't take no notice of his brother's warning. Consequence was, he goes out, got into a cross current, which overturned his boat, and my poor boy was pitched overboard, striking his temple on the side of the cap-sized boat; and being, as we suppose, stunned, he sunk like a stone, and we ain't yet recovered his body, and *all because he didn't have enough ballast in the boat.*"

I related my pathetic interview with

the old salt at a meeting presided over by no less a person than a retired Admiral.

At the close of my address the Admiral said to me, "What every man in the country needs as ballast is Love." And then he quoted our Lord's answer to the lawyer's question,





## “You ain’t got enough Ballast, Bill”

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

The Admiral meant that if we loved God, and loved our neighbour, and loved our country, an element of *safety and steadiness* would enter into our individual lives, into the relations between employers and workers, and into our relations with our country.

Is there any power which will inspire this mutual good feeling except the Gospel of Christ? The commandment of God is that “we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another.” If God so loved us—as He did—that He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, laying down His life for us, we

ought also to love one another; and if we intensely and vividly realise what we owe to God in Christ, we shall love one another with a pure flame of devotion. We love because He first loved us, and “this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.”

You can think of your individual life as a slender craft buffeted by cruel winds, and tossed by swirling currents. Love to God and love to man will steady the craft, will “ballast” it. You may think of our industrial life as a ship, in danger from hurricanes and whirlpools. Good feeling between employers and workmen, inspired by Christian faith, will “ballast” it. The law of love, proclaimed by the Christ Who loved us and gave Himself for us, must govern the lives of individual men, of classes, and of nations.

W. J. PRENTICE

## A Father's Refusal

A MOHAMMEDAN girl aged eleven was admitted to a mission hospital for injuries resulting from severe burns. Her condition was such that she could hardly lift her arm to the horizontal position. She was a handsome little girl of rich parents.

The operation was done. During the process of healing, skin-grafting was necessary, so the medical missionary asked the father of the girl if he would mind allowing a piece of thin skin to be removed from his thigh to be applied to the arm of his own daughter to enable her to resume the free use of it.

The father wanted the doctor to suggest various other lines of treatment. The doctor very clearly explained to

him that there would be very little pain and that his wound would heal very quickly, with the result that he would be conferring a life-long blessing on his dear daughter.

The man would not be convinced and went away sad, but said that he would come again in three days' time. He did come on the third day with his servant, and asked that the required piece of skin might be taken out of the servant. This was done, and the daughter left the hospital with the full use of the arm.

The missionary pointed out, however, that while the father refused to spare a piece of skin for a beloved daughter of his own, God so loved the world that He gave Himself for us while we were yet sinners!



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"He caught the animal; he just managed to hang on until the others came up"

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# A Marriage in Meadowgold



ETHEL had married Bob, and she was not satisfied.

"Shouldn't think I would be either," she uttered querulously, holding her teacup in both hands, and looking across it to Jane Flemming.

Ethel was a pretty girl, with some character in her prettiness, and in the days before she had become Bob's wife had been considered the village belle.

"Well, Bob's a good fellow, steady and hard-working. What more do you want?"

But Ethel wanted a great deal more. To begin with, her father had been in a much better position than ever Bob's folk could lay claim to. George Saunders was quite a good builder in a small way, and his daughter passing to and fro between rows of cottages and villas, all built under her father's supervision, had felt herself to be a person of considerable importance. True, George Saunders drank; but even so, there was a wide gulf between an established builder and a mere labourer; at least, so thought the folk of Meadowgold, and Ethel quite agreed with them. Bob's father was a labourer, an unambitious, honest fellow of the old school, and Bob himself was but one of the hands on old Farmer Roger's place.

"It's a come down for me," declared Ethel, in the same peevish voice, "living in a four-roomed cottage like Nellie, or Annie, or Maud Summers. I looked for something better, and I had a right to."

Jane Flemming, a gentle, contented type of woman, cast her blue eyes round her. "It's all nice as it need be, Ethel; the little neat

garden, and the pretty bits of furniture Bob was so proud to get for you."

Ethel tossed her head. Having found her parents' home an unhappy and disturbed one, on account of her father's failing, Ethel had gone out to service at the age of seventeen. Three years later, when she married Bob, she had been earning eighteen shillings a week, and spending every penny of it on the adornment of her pretty person. After all, it was her own, she had answered the reproving aunts and cousins; why shouldn't she?

"Well," said the girl, setting her cup on the saucer with unnecessary vigour, "I haven't bought a ribbon since the day I went to the church with Bob, and one doesn't lose all one's interest in clothes just because one has a ring on one's hand."

"Three months after her wedding a girl shouldn't be needing much," Mrs. Flemming observed mildly.

"Well, then, look at me now!" cried the indignant Ethel.

Bob Merton's wife was certainly somewhat dishevelled at the moment. Her fair hair was roughly knotted at the nape of her neck, a flimsy blouse, the lace much torn, was pinned at her throat, and there were splashes and stains down the light serge skirt. Her slippers could have done with a little blacking.

Jane took it all in and sighed as she did so; she was fond of Ethel—always had been, in fact.

"You didn't choose your wedding things very wisely, my dear," she reminded the girl; "but surely it isn't necessary to have your hair in straggly ends at four in——"

"Oh no, indeed!" broke in the irritated bride; "having spent the day with my hands in the wash-tub, it's a pity I haven't the energy to do my hair again as well!"

"Washing for two!" echoed Mrs. Flemming, with an irresistible smile; she had done a week's washing for five lusty children in her day, so she had the right to an opinion. "Really, Ethel, as maid up at Mrs. Salmon's, you had a



## A Marriage in Meadowgold

great deal more to do than you have now in this wee cot for yourself and Bob; yet then you always had on your black frock, and your hair smooth and pretty by two o'clock. Why drop it all just because you are Bob's wife?"

"It's all very well for *you* to talk, Aunt Jane" (Jane was only aunt by courtesy); "you that have Dollie in all day to do the rough work, and plenty of money for odds and ends. It's all different with me, and I'm not used to it." Ethel looked sulky and glum. "It's a weary, wretched prospect I have before me."

"I didn't always have Dollie," responded Mrs. Fleming quietly. She could remember the time when she had had a house, a husband and five young children, and not a soul but her own hands to help her. "I began just as you and Bob are beginning. I know that Bruce has a farm of his own these days; he got it by sheer hard work and determination, and I think your Bob has as much in him as Bruce. He's a fine lad."

Ethel rested her elbows on the table, and stared out into the bleak, grey afternoon. There was a mist and a rawness in the air.

"It isn't fair. Maybe Bob *will* get on by-and-by, when I'm old and ugly, and worn out with work. I shan't care then; I want to have a good time now. I'm sick of the cottage and the village, and every blessed thing from Meadowgold to London."

Jane looked anxious. "But, Ethel, you aren't fair to Bob. You knew what he was getting when you married him. He can't do better than he's doing."

Ethel pouted. "Before we were married, Bob would take me out of an evening, to the pictures maybe, or for a walk in the lanes on a fine night. Now he's always out."

"Yes, at his work. Then he had only one to support, now he has two. He works overtime because he likes to give you everything he can."

Ethel's face sank deeper into her hands; the sulkiness increased about her mouth. She wished Aunt Jane had not called in this afternoon.

"I hate the eternal cups and saucepans!" she exclaimed, "the sight of Bob's old boots lying about, and nothing pretty anywhere. I declare I'd like——"

It was just at this moment, almost dramatically, that Joe Brown and Sam Lewis passed the window; their heads were bent, and they did not turn and look between the small white curtains. A moment after, the two women heard a rap on the cottage door.

With a subtle feminine instinct of trouble ahead, Ethel sprang from the table and opened the door.

Joe and Sam were on the doorstep. They looked at Bob's wife as no one had ever looked at her before, and the blood drained away from her face as she met their eyes.

"Bob!" she cried. "What has happened to Bob? Tell me."

Her calmness gave these two good-hearted men a little courage. After all, as I said, there was character under Ethel's prettiness, and they tried to speak.

"An accident!" Joe stammered, "an accident up at Farmer Roger's——"

"No, man; say rather a bit of pluck," put in Sam Lewis. "The pony ran away with Roger's little girl Bessie in the trap. She shrieked; she's only a mite of three, and Bob was after it like the wind. He caught the animal; he just managed to hang on till the others came up, but——"

"Yes?" Ethel was still white and calm.

"He got knocked down somehow, kicked, and—and the wheel went over him. . . . They are bringing him along."

"Is—he—dead?"

"Well, I wouldn't say that now." Sam's eyes were positively wet with tears as he spoke.

So they could not even say he was not dead! Ethel put her hand to her chest as though it were difficult to breathe; she also shook off Jane's arm that had stolen round her shoulders.

"Don't pity me, Jane," she uttered, "I deserve it. Oh, Bob!" she broke off in a strangled whisper as a group of men rounded the corner of the lane bearing the still form of her

### MY GARDEN OF DREAMS

Full often have I visited in dreams  
A garden, with smooth lawns and flowers rare;  
Like Eden, it is watered by four streams  
That keep it verdant, fragrant, and most fair!

The first stream, "Love," is deepest of them all;  
The second "Faith" I name—I know not why,  
Save that she mirrors Heaven; and I call  
The third stream "Peace," she flows so calmly by!

The fourth I have named "Joy"—Ah, how she sings,  
As t'ward the brimming sea she wends her way!—  
A song that satisfies my heart, and rings  
Death's knell to grief, discouragement, dismay.

God showed me, as I mused on those fair streams,  
That He could make the garden of my heart  
An Eden, like the garden of my dreams,  
Whose "living waters" fruitfulness impart!

GRACE H. HILL



## A Marriage in Meadowgold

husband between them. Farmer Rogers was among them, his face grim and set.

"I'll go for the doctor," Sam then said, brushing off the tears with the back of his rough hand and picking up his bicycle. "Bob was the best pal a man could turn to."

Ethel was in a dream; she understood nothing that went on around her, only that Bob was dead; she could undo nothing. She had told him at breakfast that marriage wasn't what she had expected, and the sadness that had settled on his face at the words had not made her repent. Now she could never tell him that it was all untrue.

By-and-by she was sitting by the bed waiting for the doctor to come; it seemed as though she waited hours, but in reality it was only twenty minutes.

She heard broken fragments of the men's talk praising her Bob; she put her hands over her ears to forget it; she tried to think of the past. She remembered, somehow, how she and Bob used to go to Sunday school together years and years ago; how they used to stop by the way to pick flowers for teacher, but her Bob would always give the prettiest to her. He had loved her since she wore starched pinafores and little socks; he had been proud of loving her, the whole village had known it, and he had been glad of it.

"When I'm a big man, Ethel," he would say, "we'll go to the church like Milly and Tom. You'll wear a white veil, and I'll give you everything you can think of."

That was after the wedding of Bob's aunt. Bob had never looked at another girl in Meadowgold from his childhood on, though Ethel had grieved him once by going for walks with Sam Lewis.

Bob looked so white now, lying back on the white sheet. Ethel's whole being was one inarticulate prayer of repentance. She remembered the night before their wedding.

"I can't do for you what I'd like to do, sweetheart," Bob had said, with the manly earnestness she loved so much, "but I'll work

for you and love you as long as I live. Will you be happy with me in the little cottage, Ethel?"

Ethel had kissed him for answer, laughing at his fears. And the horrible part was that no trouble had come to them since, only her restless discontent.

Her eyes veiled with tears, Ethel now saw all the little objects of her home anew; she loved the linoleum that Bob had nailed on the floor, the little white curtains that they had fixed up together, the little trifles here and there were all beloved. How could she ever bear to look at them after—?

"I say," Farmer Rogers was declaring in a whisper, "if poor Merton only pulls through, I'll make him manager the day he returns to the farm."

Then Jane Flemming opened the door softly, and with her came Dr. Parry, a well-loved old man.

The kindly neighbours gradually dispersed, only Jane Flemming and another woman stayed on to help Ethel.

About ten o'clock that night Ethel was kneeling alone by Bob's bed, when he opened his eyes for the first time and looked at her.

His mind was confused, he had no memory of the accident, it was only Ethel's last words that seemed burnt into his mind.

"I—I've been a failure after all," he whispered faintly, his eyes dark with pain; "I couldn't make you happy, Ethel."

"Oh, Bob, darling!" murmured the girl, "it isn't true. If God lets you live, everything will be different. The doctor says you have a chance. Live for me, Bob! What shall I do without you?" Her words ended in a sob.

Between the old doctor's skill and Ethel's love, Bob did recover, but not before the girl's whole outlook on life had been transformed.

In after years they said this accident was the beginning of their true comradeship; at all events, it is the aim of all young couples in Meadowgold to attain to the happiness that Bob and Ethel have won together.

OLWEN A. JOERGENS

### A PRAYER

*"Ask, and ye shall receive."*

Give me, O God, to understand  
The wisdom of Thy guiding hand,  
And meek submission to Thy will  
That I may show Thy goodness still.

Give me, O God, strength to despise  
All meanness and all selfish lies;  
Give me delight in simple things  
From which all true contentment springs.

Give me, O God, to sympathise  
With those on whom deep sorrow lies;  
Give me a heart where'er I go  
To feel for those in grief and woe.

Give me, O God, an open mind  
Respecting all who serve mankind—  
And, knowing Thou wilt still suffice,  
Give me the joy of sacrifice.

And give me, God, strength day by day  
To live rejoicing, come what may;  
And thus to see beyond life's round  
Thy will expressed in love profound.

L. M. G.

# Cheer for To-day

**I**F you feel glum—and there's no sun—  
What *can* be done?  
Sing a song.

If you're vexed—and much perplexed—  
And ask, *what next?*  
Smile and smile.

If trouble's near—yes, even here—  
Why should you *fear*?  
Smile and sing.

God is on high—but ever nigh—  
Why do you sigh?  
Just *praise Him*.

*Then* trials go—'tis always so—  
And, you will know  
Joy, and Peace.

His Joy, and Peace—they can *not* cease—  
Will but increase  
For ever.

R. K. A.

## Moortor Folk

### Poacher Brown

**P**OACHER BROWN lived with his wife and dog in a miserable dwelling under the hill skirting Moortor.

By all known laws the wretched hovel ought to have collapsed years before, and it was only the tenant-owner's subtle art with a few nails and pieces of wood, together with some ugly twisted props, that enabled the place to withstand the ravages of time and weather.

Usually Poacher Brown was a glum, silent individual, as grim-looking as the ferocious mongrel that was his constant companion.

The man, however, was a living example of the proverb: "When drink is in, wit is out," for often after a sojourn at the "Heather Bell" his tongue of boastfulness would be hard to beat.

"I'll beat any two men in Moortor at earning money," he would often assert when in his cups. "'Tis only fools that slave for a living. . . . Me and my dog knows a thing or two, and the creature is dying to get his teeth into the leg of anybody that interferes. Draw me another pot of beer, and see the way 'Tiger' can do his share in lapping it up."

Samuel Brown's wife, as will be easily understood, had a rough time of it. She was a thin wasted woman of more than average intelligence, and the man, when under the influence of drink, would beat her unmercifully; on all other occasions he seemed to be expert in starving and wounding her soul.

It was one afternoon in early autumn. The purple tint of the heather was daily becoming more definite, and touches of gold could be seen on the luxuriant growths of bracken.

Granny Whitlock had partaken of her dinner

somewhat earlier than usual, and proceeded to get ready for a visit to the poacher's home. Word had been brought to her that Samuel Brown's wife, who had been ailing for a long time, was now confined to bed seriously ill. What the illness was she could only guess. For a whole week the woman's husband had been drinking harder than usual. And, from experience of the poacher's previous drinking bouts, Granny Whitlock knew that just now poor Susan Brown was more than likely to be needing a friend.

The day had been gusty from the beginning, but until about midday the wind had contented itself with what might be described as school-boy pranks. Then its mood changed, and its force increased greatly; by two o'clock it had cast off all restraint and become a storm.

Whilst old Granny Whitlock remained inside "Sunny View" she hardly realised the force of the tempest. It was only when she ventured out to visit Susan Brown that she became aware of it.

But the old soul, once having set her mind upon a thing, was not easily put off. Moreover, the thought of what might be happening to the poor ill-used creature in that wretched hovel under the hill acted as a spur to her good intentions, so, without more ado, she put on her ulster, and wound a wrap about her head; then bravely faced the raging elements.

The tall trees swayed alarmingly, and the wind-swept rain lashed into her face with a sting, and she felt grateful for the shelter of an avenue of elms fringing the cover of a game preserve.



## Moortor Folk

Suddenly a hawk, seemingly regardless of the storm, swiftly and silently pounced upon a little bird sheltering in the hedge, and carried the poor little thing away in its claws. It was just an ordinary happening in the order of Nature, but at sight of it the old lady shuddered, and exclaimed aloud :

"What a shame ! Pity hawks can't get their living some other way."

Hardly had the words escaped her when she was startled at hearing a coarse laugh, and at that moment the head of Samuel Brown appeared on the other side of the hedge. He, too, had seen the hawk capture the bird, and obviously had heard Granny Whitlock's comment.

"What's the use of worrying yourself about such fun as that, Granny ?" he said thickly. "Seems to me 'tis the proper game for all creatures to get a living as it pleases 'em best. That's what I believe in, meself. . . . Get all you can, and stick to it. . . . Have a look at these beauties, Granny !"

Here the man unsteadily held up a brace of fine pheasants for the old lady's inspection. He staggered as he did so, and it would only have taken half an eye to see that Samuel Brown was far from sober.

"For shame on you, Samuel !" exclaimed Granny Whitlock indignantly. "Come out of that copse at once ! You ought to be horse-whipped for taking other people's belongings like that. . . . Better far you were at home attending to your poor wife instead of being here trifling with God's commandments."

"Ha ! ha !" laughed the fellow defiantly. "I ain't no Bible fool. Take all you can. Do others, or else they'll do you, is my motto. . . . Do as you like, and care nothing for nobody. . . ." Then in a spasm of drunken

bravado he started to sing something incoherent, all the time waving the pheasants above his head in a wild manner.

"Here you are ; take them home, and enjoy a good meal," he shouted a moment later, at the same time throwing the birds over the hedge so that they dropped at the old lady's feet.

"Go on ! Pick 'em up ; they're yours !" he exclaimed, apparently amused at Granny Whitlock's momentary confusion. "Take 'em home. I can get plenty more——"

But he got no further with his drunken boasting, for suddenly there was a terrible



"Have a look at these beauties, Granny !"

## Moortor Folk

bang, and a scream of pain sounded above the noise of the wind. Then Samuel Brown started off through the woods howling as he went like a man demented. The silly fellow had let fall his gun, and as the trigger caught in some tangled undergrowth it released, and the man received the charge full blast into his arm.

A moment's thought will reveal the predicament in which old Granny Whitlock now found herself. Should she toddle after the wounded man in the thick recesses of the wood, or should she carry out her original plan, and go on to the house where his wife lay ill?

Fortunately some one coming along just then solved the problem. It was Job Strong, just on his way to "pound" some moor ponies that had strayed into a near-by farmyard.

"Seems to me that you'd best be going back to your own house on a day like this," he said, after hearing what had happened. "But if you still insist on doing something, then just leave me to hunt for Samuel Brown. . . . I expect he'll soon drop from loss of blood. Meanwhile you cut along to see to his poor missus. . . . Keep under shelter of the hedge, Granny. . . . 'Tis a cruel day for old bones. A dog wouldn't be out if he could help it."

As Granny Whitlock struggled onward the wind was full in her face. Every step was a fight, but at last the old soul arrived at her destination.

Just as she entered the house the wind seemed to be striking the ramshackle old place with heavy and repeated thuds, like the battering blows of a heavy ram. The house rocked in an alarming manner, and by the time the old soul reached the bedside of the invalid disaster seemed inevitable.

Susan Brown caught the question in Granny Whitlock's eyes.

"I think it's safe enough," she said feebly; "it always rocks a bit in a high wind. I'm quite used to it by this time." And a sigh of weary pain escaped the sufferer.

Granny Whitlock soon bustled about, and sought to make the poor woman comfortable. The poacher's wife was truly in a sad way.

"Cheer up, dearie, we'll soon have you more restful," remarked the old soul in as bright a tone as the circumstances would permit. "I've brought you something nice in my bag. Something to tempt your appetite, and when I've straightened your bed I'll just slip downstairs and make a fire so as to warm some——"

At this moment there was a noise as of a

door closing with great force; then an angry voice called up the stairs:

"Come down, you lazy good-for-nothing! Come and stop this confounded bleeding of mine. . . . Nice thing, husband shot, and you tucked up in bed like a lady. . . . Come down at once, I say, or I'll set the dog on you. . . . Hullo! that fool Job Strong has chased me to my door, has he? If he dares show his face inside this kitchen I'll give him the reason why. . . . Get away out of it, you interloper."

Here followed sounds of a scuffle, and the savage growling of Samuel Brown's dog.

Then, above the roaring of the wind, Job Strong's voice was to be heard exclaiming:

"Don't be a fool, Samuel! I tell you the chimney stack will fall in another minute. . . . Open the door like a sensible man. . . . I'll see to your wounds. . . . You'll bleed to death else. . . . Let me bring your wife out. . . . And if Granny Whitlock is upstairs with her she must come too. . . . 'Tis certain death to all of you if you stay in the place."

But as the shaky structure swayed under the ever-growing force of the tempest the maudlin voice of Poacher Brown stuttered out:

"Clear away, you miserable interfering idiot. Go home and say some of your pretty prayers. . . . You shan't disturb anybody in my place. . . . My home's my castle. . . . 'Twas me that burnt down yours for you awhile ago, when you acted such a gentleman to old Peter Johnson. And if you set foot inside here I'll——"

Further words were suddenly cut short.

There came a fearful crash, and through an opening in the roof tiles and mortar descended with terrible force. One whole end of the house collapsed like a pack of cards, and there came up a suffocating cloud of dust from the ruins, like the sulphur from a smouldering volcano.

They buried Job Strong in the little Moortor churchyard a week later. He had gone to his death trying to save Poacher Brown, who had miraculously escaped the falling ruins.

And, next to Job Strong's heroism, people will never cease to speak of the wonderful bravery of dear old Granny Whitlock, who, when the house was falling, threw herself over the poor bruised body of the poacher's wife, and thus afforded that protection which undoubtedly saved her life.

But, after the shock of that terrible experience, the dear old soul was never the same strong old woman again.



# PRIMROSE FARM

*By Eleanor Clare.*



A HAPPIER little farm than Primrose Farm one could not possibly imagine. From early milking time to half-past nine at night Farmer Hatchell and his wife sang at their work, and their two children were the bonniest, rosiest-cheeked children for miles around. So thought Mrs. Hatchell on this particular September morning, as she heard Teddie at play in the cobbled yard.

The sun shone warm and brightly in at the open door, and Teddie's clear voice rang out as he repeated part of the parable he was learning at Sunday school. He had taken a handful of meal from a bag that hung on the kitchen doorknob, and he was scattering it about, saying: "Some seeds fell by the wayside, and some fell upon stony places and the sun shone and they withered away."

Mrs. Hatchell smiled tenderly. She was brushing the tangles out of Willie's flaxen curls; he fidgetted to join his brother. Willie was not yet three, and a year younger than Teddie. He was very like his mother. He had the same beseeching blue eyes and fair hair. His father called it "ripe corn." It formed a striking contrast to his own dark wavy hair.

A good-sized deal table occupied the centre of the farm kitchen, and, although it was not yet eight o'clock, one end of the table was piled up with poultry ready for plucking. The other end was laid for breakfast.

Presently Willie trotted out, and, watching his brother admiringly, tried to repeat what he was saying. But Teddie could not make up his mind exactly where to put the seeds. He first scattered a few on the ground, then picked them up again and placed them between the cracks of the stones; and some he gave to Willie.

His mother listened with joy and pride in her heart as she busied herself with the breakfast. It was wonderful, was her unspoken thought, that he could already repeat from the first to the sixth verse of the parable.

At one time the fields surrounding Primrose

Farm were yellow with primroses every spring time; that is why it was called Primrose Farm. But now the fields were given over to pasture and arable land. The road in front of the house ran through the village about a mile away, and the same road divided Farmer Hatchell's house from his cornfields. The pasture land faced the parlour window, at the other side of the house.

Mrs. Hatchell, catching sight of her husband coming down the path which divided the fields, took the frying-pan from a hook under the window-sill. A few minutes later the farmer stood at the gate and watched the children playing. The bacon sizzling in the pan smelt good, for he was hungry. The children had not yet caught sight of him. He was surprised that Teddie knew so much Scripture, and was amused to see Willie with seeds in his shut little fist.

Then Willie saw him and dropped the seeds into a hawthorn bush by the window, and ran to him. Mrs. Hatchell saw the action: "And some fell among thorns," she said gaily as she came to the door.

Willie, supported by strong, outstretched arms, was climbing up his father's leather leggings, then, hoisted on to his shoulder, was carried indoors and seated in his high chair.

Years later the whole scene came vividly before Mrs. Hatchell, but at the time she thought only of her children—of Teddie, so sweet in his white socks toddling into the kitchen, and her husband's smile of greeting.

"We've made the farm look a bit different,



## Primrose Farm

haven't we, Kate?" remarked the farmer, placing a cushion on a chair for Teddie, and lifting him in it. Teddie always sat next to daddie. "Five years ago, when we came here newly-married, most of it was unenclosed and uncultivated land. D'you remember?"

His wife did not reply for a moment. She was dipping a slice of bread into bacon-fat for the children.

"I was just thinking of the parable of the Sower, Edward; what Teddie's learning, bless him! And when you spoke of uncultivated land it made me think of John the Baptist coming first to prepare the ground for the Sower."

"You're always trying to bring spiritual things into the ordinary affairs of life. I suppose it's a woman's way," he smiled indulgently, and helped himself to bread. There was silence for a while, and when he began again it was in a more serious tone. "It was an act of self-denial to sow all that seed corn, but I did it to get an abundant increase this autumn. It's the uncertainty of the result," he added,

helping himself to mustard; "the sun may scorch it, the caterpillar may devour it. This uncertainty means exercise of faith and patience."

"But this very uncertainty means that we must have faith in the Lord, doesn't it?"

He did not answer. And when he rose he turned to the window to watch the gathering clouds; and his wife, seeing the cloud on his own face, said no more.

Now, it dawned on her that it had been so lately. When she spoke of things nearest her heart he did not seem to be listening. She gazed after him, puzzled, as he went out; then she busied herself about her duties while the children played in a corner of the large kitchen.

A night or two after that she noticed that her husband got into bed without saying his prayers, so she reminded him; but he replied that he had said them in bed, being so tired.

"Blanket prayers are never heard," she remonstrated; but he just turned over on his side.

She always dated that time as the end of the



Willie, hoisted on his father's shoulders, was carried indoors



## Primrose Farm

happy days. He became sullen and changeable; his good humour depended so much upon the weather—the sort of weather he wanted at the time. And when she suggested that he should put his trust in the Lord if he wanted a good harvest, he replied that she knew nothing about such things.

In the spring time, when the sky was a cold, stony blue, she would notice him from the kitchen window while she prepared the vegetables for dinner; and she would think how lonely he looked there, as he went from furrow to furrow scattering the precious seed. Somehow, it always made her think of that other Sower, and how lonely He must have been when He was on earth. One day she ventured to say so; but when he turned to speak it was of something else.

Many years of seed time and harvest had come and gone. The boys had now to think of what they should be. Ted couldn't make up his mind, so his father set him to work on the land. But Will, tall for his age, said: "I'm for the city, dad; where there's a chance of making money." He became employed as clerk at a jam factory. He was not afraid of work, and as overtime meant double pay he was always ready to stay behind. He got on well, and, in fact, wrote of coming down for the Sunday on a motor bike.

Then came a day when Mrs. Hatchell lay in bed ill. She watched the sky through the window that faced her pillow. Through the open window she heard her husband say to Ted: "A lot of those seeds I planted have been eaten up by the fowls; they must have got loose," and she thought of the parable of the Sower; of that part where our Lord explains that "the seeds that fall by the wayside" are those who hear the Word and do not understand. And she thought how like it was to his own life. She wished she had the courage to speak her thoughts when he came up. But it would only vex him now; she sighed. It was not like the old days.

She had so much time to think, lying there; but the doctor had been most emphatic that she should go to bed. He had said, at first, that she could rest on the sofa in the kitchen. But she had seen too much that needed to be done; and when he called unexpectedly and saw her walking about he said varicose veins had to be taken seriously or they caused a deal of trouble—sometimes an operation. So he ordered her to bed.

It was a beautiful mild September day, just

such another day as when the children had played in the yard all those years ago. With a sharp stab at her heart she remembered Willie throwing the seeds into the hawthorn bush. She had laughed, actually laughed at the time! And now his life was just like "the seed among the thorns." One that heareth the Word but the deceitfulness of riches chokes it.

Once again she heard her husband's voice below. He was scolding Ted because he had been attending to a neighbour's business instead of to their own field.

"It's sheer waste of time," she heard him say, "attending to other people's business! When your thoughts are somewhere else how is it possible to reap our own harvest?"

The tears sprang to her eyes as she thought of that part of the parable where our Lord says: "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself . . ."; and she thought of that happy time when he had scattered the seed about the cobbled yard: "With joy he had received the Word . . ." It was all so different now.

She turned her face to the wall and wept. Then she prayed, prayed that all, even yet, might be well. She did not know how it was to come about, but the prayer left her full of patient trust.

A neighbour, who had come in to help, brought her tea; and ten minutes later she heard the throb of a motor bike, and presently Willie came into the room. He bent to kiss her pale cheek, then he sat on the side of the bed.

Ted and his father were not long in following him upstairs, for the kitchen was not the same without mother. The farmer asked her tenderly if there was anything he could do. He was drawing down the blind at the time, and somehow, she never knew how it came about, but in a few minutes she found herself telling them all the sad thoughts of the afternoon.

She spoke as it were to herself, like one inspired. Her husband thought she was delirious at first; and Ted, who had stooped to tie his shoe, stared at her in amazement as she showed each one in turn his likeness to the seed explained by that Sower. When she had finished she smiled at each, in turn. Such a sweet, sad smile. Her husband kissed her.

"Rest! Kate, your prayers are answered. Only get well and the old happy days'll come again." Then, turning to his sons, he said: "Come, we must leave her now; she's tired."



## Primrose Farm

So they went out—went quietly downstairs, and she could hear the low murmur of their voices as she closed her eyes.

"Sons! your mother is right! She—God bless her!—is just the good soil. From this night we must be re-united in prayer."

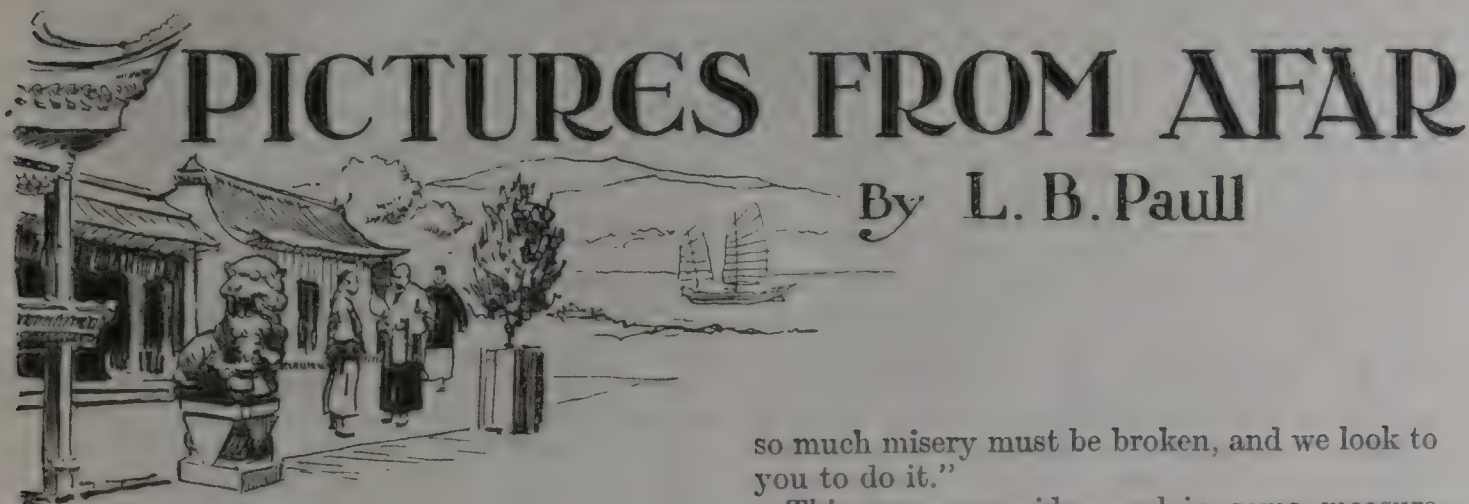
And the sons earnestly agreed.

Very peaceful were the next few weeks, for Primrose Farm was getting back its old spirit of happiness. And, some time later, the

farmer and his wife walked along the side of the cornfields and looked at the same things with the same thoughts in their hearts.

"You were right, sweetheart," he said, pressing her arm. "I see it now. While I was cultivating my fields I was neglecting the good seed in my heart. Thank God, I and the boys have not left it too late."

And the sight of the golden fields of corn had now a double meaning.



## PICTURES FROM AFAR

By L. B. Paull

ONE day a number of Chinese students gathered round the missionary to discuss a subject which they had very much at heart.

"You and your wife are so happy," said one.

"Of course we are," replied the missionary; "we had known one another, and loved one another, before we thought about marriage."

The silence which followed was eloquent, for these boys were contrasting this with their own hard lot. Young, full of enthusiasm in some cases; longing to do great things; clever, skilful; they knew that any day they might receive a command from those in authority to be present at their own marriage ceremony, to meet for the first time the girl to whom they had been betrothed in infancy. Perhaps a boy, full of promise, beloved by all who knew him, would find his bride a dull, heavy-eyed girl who had not been taught to read or write.

This boy or his parents must pay a heavy sum to those who arrange the marriage, which means that the choice of a wife is often put into the hands of a third party who handles the money and who, as every one knows, will make the biggest profit out of it that he can. What an incredibly stupid arrangement this is!

"It is for you to change these things," said the missionary; "these customs which cause

so much misery must be broken, and we look to you to do it."

This was a new idea, and in some measure it has brought forth fruit. Even though the ceremony, when the mysterious Eight Chinese Characters are exchanged, is as binding as our Western marriage, and the best Chinese opinion holds it a shameful thing to break an engagement, some of these students have firmly refused to carry out their marriage as arranged, and instead, have chosen attractive girls from the Mission Schools who have been taught to read and write, and to run a home so as to ensure comfort and health.

In a certain small village, the only shop is kept by a very busy and enterprising little woman. She has managed to learn to read the awful Chinese character in spite of all the other things she has had to do. She has six sons and one daughter. One day the missionary called and asked her if her "heart was at peace" about her family. Her face puckered up with trouble and in a whisper she said that her eldest son was refusing to marry the girl he had been engaged to in infancy, and that her second and third and fourth sons had done just the same. The fifth son, who had been born since she had become a Christian, was free.

The engine-man at one of the Colleges surprised the missionary by saying that he was to be married next day. He wanted to have the spare classroom in the little Day school for his



## Pictures from Afar

bride for a week. At the end of that time she was wanted at his home in the country—in fact, it was the need of the elder brother, a widower with no one to look after his family, that was necessitating the engine-man taking to himself a wife. The brother could not face a second marriage financially.

So the engine-man sold his fields, and paid three hundred strings of cash, and seemed shy but rather excited at seeing his wife for the first time next day. She was twenty years of age, so he had been told, and possibly he was imagining an attractive young girl as his partner in life. They came up from the town next day together, the engine-man looking rather glum, and the wife looking at least thirty and evidently in very poor health. The missionary and his wife did what they could. They decorated the little Day school and made their room look very nice with red bunting and chrysanthemums which were glorious just then, and the mission-

ary and two scouts ran the engine that evening so as to give him a quiet time.

### THE STREAMLET

High on the moorland  
Mid the green gorse;  
Gaily the streamlet  
Laughs on its course,  
Braving the east wind,  
Cutting and chill,  
Singing it ripples  
Fast down the hill.

So, 'mid Life's winter,  
Brave hearts and true  
Praise the Creator  
Each day anew;  
What though the pathway  
Often is drear,  
God is their refuge,  
Why should they fear?  
NORA C. USHER

My daughter writes: "One of the saddest things to come back to is this horrible Oriental idea of marriage. This last week a pitiful case came to my notice. A tall, gaunt woman came to see me to borrow three dollars. She felt outraged by an unkind Fate because her son's fiancée, a poor little consumptive creature who had been bought cheap in childhood, had died, and now, as her son must

marry, having reached the customary age, she must needs buy a new one. She looked at me with flashing eyes for a second or two and then almost shouted: "And at twenty-two they cost two hundred and fifty strings of cash!"

Not a word as to whether the couple were likely to get on well together. No thought except for the money. And the price to be paid probably prejudiced this poor girl's future in that home.

## "I Won't have him Laughed At"

TWO seamen came strolling along the docks on their way up to the town—most likely to the public-house, for their ship had just paid off, and their pockets were full of money.

"Ho, ho!" laughed one of them. "Jest look at that there dawg! Not 'arf a beauty 'e ain't, I don't think! First prize easy; ho, ho!"

"Don't you dare laugh at my dog, or I'll give you what for!" flared out his owner, Joe Garner, one of a group of dock labourers who were sitting about, enjoying the rest of the dinner-hour. He rose to his feet, clenched his fists, and took a step forward.

"Garn! I'm not 'urtin' 'im; and 'e is a beauty! Game leg, one eye, and no 'air on 'is 'ead. Yah! Yer'll call 'im a Christian next."

Joe's face changed instantly. He sat down again and stretched out his hand.

"'Ere, Bob," he called.

The dog, a bull-terrier, limped over to his master and licked his hand.

"You're right," said Joe to the aggressive

seaman; "he's better than some that calls themselves Christians, and I'll tell you for why. A while back I'd bin drinkin' and I went 'ome, and old Bob comes whinin' up to me to give 'im somat to eat—'e was 'ungry, poor chap! I 'adn't got nothin' for 'im; I'd ought to a bought 'im a bite, but I'd spent it all on drink. An' just becos o' that, I felt mad, and I kicked 'im an' told 'im to 'old 'is row. I'd broke 'is leg, so 'e 'owled worse, an' I kicked 'im again on th' 'ead, an' 'e rolled over. I thought I'd killed 'im, an' then I was madder nor before, an' I went out into the street.

"After a bit the drink went out o' me an' I begun to think it 'ud be lonely wi'out old Bob, so I got back 'ome an' looked at 'im. 'E jest put up 'is 'ead an' licked me 'and. 'Turnin' th' other cheek,' like what the preacher said 'oo come along 'ere. And that's why I won't 'ave 'im laughed at. An' I tell you straight, mates, I've swore off drink, for old Bob's sake, for 's long 's I live. I won't be a worse Christian nor what 'e is."

# That Five-pound Note

By LUCY LAING

MRS. ROSE was really a rather comical figure, although the fact did not disturb her at all. She was almost as broad as she was long, and her dress could scarcely fail to bring a smile to the lips of those with whom she came in contact; not that she minded. She had been heard to say "that you were doing humanity a turn if you could get 'em to give a good honest laugh."

Mrs. Rose was an elderly widow and earned her living at charring. Being a good worker, ladies were only too glad to secure her services, and she had a good connection. Wednesday afternoons, however, she put aside religiously for visiting at the county hospital, and no offer, however tempting, would persuade her to give up that little bit of work for God.

Mrs. Rose's religion, like herself, was good, and pure, and true, and she lived Christ in every detail of her daily life. She was wont to say, "Talking ain't my strong point; I just banks on 'The Book.'"

And truly those suffering souls knew when they saw her waddling to their bedside, that just the right bit of that said Book would be opened up for their benefit, and just the most comforting words of prayer breathed for their special needs ere she left them.

The doctors and nurses had great fun between themselves at Mrs. Rose's expense, yet, for all that, one and all liked and respected her.

A young student with a merry twinkle in his eye stopped her one afternoon as she was leaving the ward.

"Good morning, Mrs. Rose," he said; "you look just as blooming as ever."

"Thank you kindly, sir," she answered, with a little old-fashioned curtsy. "I am enjoying the best of health; and if I might be permitted to return the compliment, you look unusual well yourself, too, sir."

"Surely not, Mrs. Rose; look again. My nerves are in a shocking state; they are, indeed!"

Mrs. Rose looked at him sceptically. "You young gents must always have your poke o' fun," she said.

"Ah, but it isn't fun, Mrs. Rose, and there's a reason. I am frightfully hard up!"

His expression seemed genuine, and Mrs. Rose looked sympathetic.

"Are you, now? Well, I'm real sorry for you."

In spite of himself a smile began to creep round the young man's mouth.

"If I don't get five pounds from somewhere," he went on, "I don't know what will happen. Now, Mrs. Rose, you believe God answers prayer, don't you?"

"Yes, sir, I *know* He does."

"Well, if you prayed for a five-pound note could you be sure of getting it?"

"No, sir!"

"Why not?"

"Because my Father might not think I needed it."

"Oh well, I *do* need it, you see; in fact, as I told you, it is imperative that I should have it. What I want to ask you, Mrs. Rose, is this: If I pray to God, and ask Him to send me a five-pound note, can you guarantee that He will answer my prayer, and send it?"

Poor Mrs. Rose! She began to feel her heart beating rather quickly, and her cheeks became very flushed, for she realised now that this young student was only fooling at her expense. Yet, with a swift prayer for help, she seized the opportunity for a faithful word. She might never again have such another. She looked straight into that mocking young face for a moment, and then she said:

"Do you know the Prince of Wales, sir?"

"No, Mrs. Rose, can't say that I do; but what connection has he with the subject in hand?"

"Wait a bit, sir. You know him well enough by sight, maybe?"

"Of course; who doesn't?"

"Well, sir, if you saw him standing in the street, would you go up to him and ask him for a five-pound note?"

The young man laughed heartily. "Don't be so absurd, Mrs. Rose; there is no point in such an argument. As I told you, I don't *know* the Prince of Wales."

Then Mrs. Rose found her opportunity. "No more do you know my Father, sir," she said; "and until you do, you can't ask no favours. After you have trusted Him in simple faith, and asked Him to make you His child, for Jesus' sake, then—as His child—you can pray for a five-pound note, and if He sees you need it, He will send it. No offence meant, sir. Good afternoon!"

And Mrs. Rose waddled down the corridor with legs that trembled, and the young man watched her, a new light breaking upon his clever, though cynical face.



# The Slip-Coach

By BENJAMIN J. GIBBON

**I** WAS standing, late in the evening, on a lonely railway platform in the Midlands, when an express train rushed past. Bound from London to the North, it was travelling at great speed. A roar, as of thunder; a flash, as of lightning—and it was gone. It almost swept me off my feet, and quite took away my breath.

A few seconds passed, and I became aware of a dim object looming out of the darkness from which the train had come. It was a railway carriage, coming slowly and silently to rest at the platform. People got out of it, and I realised that this was a slip-coach—that convenient device by which folk can be left at a station at which the train does not stop. A slip-coach—the express had thrown it off and left it behind as it thundered along its great way.

A slip-coach! Somehow or other, the sight of it brought certain words of Scripture vividly to my mind—

**“Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark.”**

How many people, I thought, would like to do that! How much happier their course would be, how much greater their progress, if they could only slip a coach! As it is, they

are haunted and handicapped by dark memories. Secret remorse torments them. If only they could forget some dreadful thing in their past—cut it adrift and leave it behind for ever—what a godsend it would be!

And I realised also, with a throb of delight, that such a miracle is possible. The marvellous message of the Gospel is that this great thing can be done. By the grace of God, it can happen at any moment. Sin can be forgiven—forth-given—sent away into a land of forgetfulness—and the conscience pacified and made glad. That dark coach can be slipped. Multitudes know it from happy experience. This is their story; this is their song—

**“Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed**



## The Slip-Coach

us from our sins by His blood ; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever."

In the weird old fairy-tale of Sinbad the Sailor, we are told of an Old Man of the Sea who perched upon his shoulders and refused to be dislodged. This creature tormented him day and night, ground him down to skin and bone, and made his life a perfect misery.

That is a true bit of human experience, grotesquely told. Many of us read the wretched sailor's story with a sympathetic shudder. We also have been hag-ridden by the Old Man of the Sea. HE IS OUR SINFUL PAST.

John Bunyan in his great allegory describes the pilgrim struggling on towards the Celestial City with a terrible burden upon his back. It is the old, old experience put in another way. But the pilgrim found deliverance—or he would never have reached his City of Desire.

He came to a Cross and, as he sighted it, the burden fell from his shoulders and went rolling, rolling, until it disappeared into a sepulchre that gaped at the foot of the Cross.

"Then," says Bunyan, "Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing—

'Blest Cross ! blest sepulchre ! blest rather be  
The Man that there was put to shame for me !'

This is the meaning : Jesus Christ upon the Cross died to atone for our sins. He took our place ; He assumed our guilt ; He endured our punishment.

"His own Self bare our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." All that remains for us is steadily to realise the fact and its implications. Thus—

"My sin—oh the bliss of this glorious thought !—  
My sin—not in part, but the whole—  
Is nailed to His Cross ; and I bear it no more ;  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul !"

Martin Luther also had strange dreams. In one of them, he tells us, the devil came to him with a long and dreadful record in his hand, which he held out with fiendish glee. It was the catalogue of Luther's sins. And the trouble was that it was a true list in every detail. How then dare he call himself a Christian, pretend to be at peace with God, profess to be bound for heaven, when he was guilty of all these dire offences ?

But Luther was in no wise disconcerted. "It is all true," he said ; "but one thing you have forgotten. You have forgotten to write at the bottom—

**'The blood of  
Jesus Christ, His  
Son, cleanseth us  
from all sin.'**"

And at that the old enemy immediately turned tail and fled.

And what Luther did, we also may do. What did he do ? He put the atonement of Christ between himself and his sins. He claimed to be liberated from them by his Saviour's blood. He denied their power to torment him any further. And we may do the same. **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"**—and slip that coach !

### THE END OF THE DAY

The day is ended, Ere I sink to sleep  
My weary spirit seeks repose in Thine ;  
Father, forgive my trespasses, and keep  
This little life of mine.

With loving kindness curtain Thou my bed,  
And cool in rest my burning pilgrim feet ;  
Thy pardon be the pillow for my head,  
So shall my sleep be sweet.

At peace with all the world, dear Lord, and Thee,  
No fears my soul's unwavering faith can shake ;  
All's well ! whichever side the grave for me  
The morning light will break.

H. M. KIMBALL.



# How to Read the Bible

**R**EAD it with a view to living it rather than learning it.

Get the truths in your heart.

Feed on the promises of your Bible.

Study it so as to walk with God and lead souls to Christ.

The result of study is not to show how wise you are, but how much you can imitate Christ.

Apply what you read to your life.

Remember the great theme of the Bible is Christ; look for Him while studying.

The question is not what you read, but what you make your own.

The very aim and end of our Bible study should be growth in grace, in knowledge, and in holiness.

God's great object in giving us the Bible is to reveal Christ to us as the Saviour, God's own gift of love; and our object in reading the Scriptures should be to find Christ in them.

Seek to know the kind of truth each Book contains, and what particular phase of truth we get in each chapter in the Bible.

The Bible should be constantly fresh in our minds to secure us against temptations which are sure to meet us daily in some form or other.

Try to draw for yourself lessons from every passage you study.

The Bible does not so much reveal the Land to which we go, as the way to reach it.

The Bible aims only to touch the mainspring of character, and so to set men right with God, with themselves, and their fellowmen, by enlightening the understanding, purifying the conscience, changing the heart, and preparing men for every function and department of life.

The aim of the Bible is not to teach everything that men do in the light, but

merely to furnish the light for doing what their circumstances and necessities require to be done. Bread does not undertake to reap the harvest, or plough the field, or blast the rock, or delve in the mine, or fish in the sea, but it makes a man strong so that he can do it.

God's Word is intended as a guide in the formation of dispositions, in the regulation of conduct and character, in the founding of hope for this life, and that which is to come.

The Bible is intended to cheer man when the tempest beats around him and the waves roll high.

## WHITE RAIMENT

*"They shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy."—Rev. iii. 4.*

*"My saints shall walk with Me in raiment white"—  
Yea, Lord, when Thou hast slain  
Grim death, and welcomed me to realms of Light,  
All sin, all fear, all pain  
For ever vanquished, I shall walk arrayed,  
Perchance, in glistening raiment Thou hast made!*

*"My saints shall walk with Me in raiment white  
Within My garden fair.  
Yea, all the overcomers in the fight  
Shall verily walk there;  
E'en on the earth their robes may spotless be,  
Invisible to men, but seen of Me!"*

*"My saints shall walk with Me in raiment white,  
For true and worthy they."  
Nay, Lord, Thou only in the Father's sight  
Art worthy—hear me pray:  
Inspire Thy child with noble deed and thought—  
Man's holiness by Thee alone is wrought.*

*Give me the dress more radiant than the snow,  
Thy Robe of Righteousness,  
Thy graciousness, Thy strength, Thy faith bestow  
In tribulation's stress:  
So shall I walk with Thee in purest white  
Through earth's dark shadows into endless Light!*  
GRACE H. HILL



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# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village

by Amos E. Denner

## Granny Whitlock's Prodigal

THE greatest sensation that Moortor village ever experienced was when the auction bills appeared announcing the impending sale of "Sunny View," Granny Whitlock's pretty little haven of peace.

Some of the villagers felt inwardly condemned for even daring to read the details set out in the usual soulless fashion on the posters.

"Seems like peeping into a sort of sacred letter," commented James Grice, who, in spite of his having just passed his sixtieth birthday, did a lively sprint across the road to read the information displayed on a barn door. Later, when delivering a parcel to Mary Waters of the village grocery stores, he dallied long in discussing the unexpected news.

"'Tis all such a mystery, Mary," he exclaimed agitatedly. "None of us was expectin' such a thunder bolt. . . . I could read all about the trees, and shrubs, and fruit bushes on the bills easy enough, but when it came to particulars of Granny Whitlock's grandfather clock, and warming pan, and such like household treasures—well . . . I seem to feel sort o' choked somehow. . . . Now if that son Donald could only see these bills I wonder what he'd feel like? Pity he didn't stay at home and behave himself, same as he was always brought up to do. Ah, well——"

Here the postman seemed at a loss for words,

so with a remarkably healthy sigh he now shouldered his post-bag, and, with a lingering look at the good woman behind the counter, he set out to complete his morning delivery. He had taken a few steps down the road when he suddenly seemed to remember something, and returned to the shop.

"I forgot to tell you in confidence, Mary—quite unofficial like, of course—that I've got a letter for 'Sunny View' to-day. 'Tis from Canada, too, I should judge by the stamp. . . . But what I really came back for was to ask you when you are going to make up your mind to have me for your man? You know I have always wanted to take care of you, and——"

"And if you don't make haste and clear off I'll report you for neglecting your duty," interrupted Mary Waters smilingly. "Now be off with you, sharp! . . . Talking like that—first thing in the morning too!"

And the postman thought he had better be hurrying on.

He had not gone far, however, before he became conscious of footsteps hurrying after him. Turning, he saw Lilian Waters, the youngest sister of the spinster shopkeeper. She was evidently trying to overtake him.

"Excuse me, Mr. Grice," she exclaimed when she had recovered her breath, "I—I was in the room behind the counter just now. Did I understand you to say that you had a Canadian letter for Granny Whitlock?"

"None o' your trying to corrupt an official o' the Crown in the pursuit of his duties," was the smattering of text-book regulation which the postman tantalisingly quoted in reply, at the same time pretending to walk away.

"Oh, but don't forget I heard you give away official information," countered the woman.



## Moortor Folk

"Then if you know why do you ask me?" queried the postman. He had something of a reputation for being a "proper tease."

"Because—I wondered if you would just allow me to look at the handwriting on the envelope," said Lilian Waters, hesitatingly. "I'm expecting some one to—that is—I'm hoping— Oh! come on, Mr. Grice. Just let me have one peep."

It seemed really too bad of the postman not to accede to his friend's wish, but the good man was nothing if not "conscientious" in his own way. Just then, however, the bundle of missives in his hand seemed to be giving him some slight trouble. They appeared to require re-assorting, and in the process one letter got dislodged and dropped to the ground.

Instantly Lilian Waters bent down and picked it up. When she handed it back to Mr. Grice her eyes had seen what she wanted.

"What a fine buxom creature she is," mused the postman between his cheery rat-tats through Moortor village. "Nearly as good as her sister. She deserves a good man for a husband. . . . Funny, but she seems fair gone on that prodigal Donald Whitlock. . . . Ah, well! . . . Life's a bit of a tangle." At this moment, his eye caught sight of another of the posters announcing the sale of Granny Whitlock's home.

"If only Mr. Groves happened to be home now instead of on that long trip to the Continent," he sighed, "I'll warrant the sale would never come off. Best man we ever had in Moortor. Ah well, 'tis all fair amazin'."

At "Sunny View," in response to the postman's knock, old Granny Whitlock stood in the doorway. Only a very few intimate friends knew how deeply she felt the pang of a certain cruel day four years ago when, after a period of wild oat sowing, her son had taken his departure for Canada, leaving his widowed mother to clear up his debts as well as possible. And not a soul in Moortor guessed at the reason for the appearance of the auction bills either.

Truth to tell, it was all on account of Ned Payne, the "gawmless" shoemaker. Two of the man's children had got into mischief and had been sent to a reformatory. The inevitable demand from the authorities for maintenance support followed. Ned Payne never paid a penny, and consequently, after a lengthy period of grace, the man had been sent to prison for default. He only remained in prison three days! Some one paid up the debt in

full. One old lady, at least, in Moortor, couldn't bear the thought of the father of a large family leaving his dependants to the care of the "Parish." But the effort at release was a costly one, as the auction bills bore witness. And not even Ned Payne himself guessed at the truth. Thoughtfulness was not much in his line.

When postman Grice delivered his letter to Granny Whitlock the cute official suddenly bent down to deal with an apparently slack boot-lace. It was an old dodge, and it usually gave people time to open their letters on the doorstep.

But to-day there was no need for such subterfuge, for, on seeing the handwriting on the envelope, Granny Whitlock exclaimed:

"Maybe you'd like to step in for a cup of tea, James. You've finished your round and"—indicating the letter in her hand—"I think there's something here worth talking about."

The old grandfather clock ticked lazily as the postman sat in the cosy little room. Everything about the place, even to the tabby cat, curled up snugly on some cushions, suggested an added pang to the thought of the impending break-up of a dear old home.

Over the mantelpiece hung a hand-worked floral text bearing the words—"ALL THY CHILDREN SHALL BE TAUGHT OF THE LORD."

The tragedy of it! In three days, reflected the postman, the ruthless hammer of the auctioneer would be heard, and then——

"Yes, please, Mrs. Whitlock," he said aloud, in response to the old lady's inquiry; "I usually take two lumps of sugar, and, if I may make so bold, I shall enjoy that cup of tea all the more if you will join me."

It was an awkward attempt on the part of James Grice to say something comforting.

"After I've told you my wonderful news," said the old lady, who had by this time read the letter. Her face had lit up with pure joy.

"Isn't it just wonderful to think that my son is on his way home? . . . I shall see him on Thursday. . . . God is more than good."

"Our heavenly Father has heard your prayers, Mrs. Whitlock," said the postman, struggling with his own emotion. Then he suddenly banged his cup down on the saucer in a manner that threatened the safety of that bit of best china. "You say that Donald will be here on Thursday?" he asked.



## Moortor Folk

"Yes," came the steady answer; "and I know what you are thinking. But to my mind 'tis better that my son should be spared the sight of Wednesday's happenings. He might be cut up at seeing the old home sold. . . . It's just wonderful how God plans everything for the best."

From early morning on Wednesday all roads seemed to lead to "Sunny View." Several small groups were to be seen standing about the place, and could their conversation have been overheard the gist of it was to the effect that as much

as possible of the old lady's furniture was to be "bought in," by mutual arrangement.

Granny Whitlock remained quietly in the house, notwithstanding kindly efforts of friends to get her away, and at twelve o'clock the business began.

"I'll try selling the house and furniture as it stands, first of all," said the auctioneer. "Two hundred pounds I'm bid for this splendid little investment. Any advance before I divide it into lots?"

"Two fifty," came from a farmer recently moved into Moortor.

"Make it three hundred, sir, and I'll take you seriously," said the auctioneer. But the man shook his head.

"Right! Three hundred it is," shouted a voice from the back of the crowd. And when the next moment the hammer fell something like a groan went up from many worthy Moortor folk. All their little "buying in" plans seemed to have gone astray.

But when, a little later, they saw a fine thick-set man locked in old Granny Whitlock's arms their gloomy forebodings changed to



"Isn't it wonderful to think that my son is on his way home?"

joy, and more than one lip quivered, because of a fresh meaning to the New Testament story of a son once lost but found.

"Donald came home a day sooner than expected," explained James Grice to Mary Waters at the shop that evening. "He's a changed man by the grace of God. That visit to Canada did him good in several ways. . . . Fancy working for Joseph Snell out there. . . . And the old gentleman left him all his money too. Seems as if Joseph Snell led him to the Lord."

Mary Waters laughed.

"Lilian has known all about it for some time," she said pleasantly. "And my sister has just told me that Donald wants to marry her in a month. I shall be rare and lonely when she goes."

"You needn't be, Mary," said the postman eagerly. "Let me keep you company. Why not make the wedding day a double event?"

And this time the shopkeeper didn't say "no."

# The Master is Coming

THEY said, "The Master is coming to honour the town to-day,  
And none can tell at whose house or home the Master will choose to stay."  
And I thought, while my heart beat wildly,  
what if He should come to mine?  
How I would strive to entertain and honour the Guest Divine!

And straight I turned to toiling to make my home more neat;  
I swept, and polished, and garnished, and decked it with blossoms sweet;  
I was troubled for fear the Master might come ere my task was done,  
And I hastened and worked the faster, and watched the hurrying sun.

But right in the midst of my duties a woman came to my door;  
She had come to tell me her sorrows, and my comfort and aid to implore.  
And I said, "I cannot listen, nor help you at all to-day,  
I have greater things to attend to." And the pleader turned away.

And soon there came another—a cripple, thin, pale and grey—  
And said, "Oh, let me stop and rest awhile in your home, I pray;  
I have travelled far since morning, I am hungry, and faint, and weak,  
My heart is full of misery, and comfort and help I seek."

And I said, "I am grieved and sorry, but I cannot help you to-day;  
I look for a great and noble Guest," and the cripple went away.  
And the day wore on more swiftly, and my task was nearly done,  
And an earnest prayer was in my heart that soon might the Master come.

And I thought I would spring to meet Him, and serve Him with utmost care,  
When a little child stood by me with a face so sweet and fair—

Sweet, but with marks of tear-drops, and his clothes were tattered and old,  
A finger was bruised and bleeding, and his little bare feet were cold.

And I said, "I am sorry for you, you are sorely in need of care,  
But I cannot stop to give it, you must hasten elsewhere."

And at the words a shadow swept o'er his blue-veined brow.  
"Some one will feed and clothe you, dear, but I am too busy now."

At last the day was ended, and my toil was over and done;  
My house was swept and garnished, and I watched in the dark alone;  
Watched, but no footfall sounded, no one paused at my gate,  
No one entered my cottage door, I could only pray and wait.

I waited till night had deepened, and the Master had not come;  
"He has entered some other door," I cried,  
"And gladdened some other home":  
My labour had been for nothing, and I bowed my head and wept,  
My heart was sore with longing, yet spite of it all, I slept.

Then the Master stood before me, and His face was grave and fair;  
"Three times to-day I came to your door and craved your pity and care;  
Three times you sent Me onward, unhelped and un comforted,  
And the blessing you might have had was lost, and your chance to serve has fled."

"O Lord, dear Lord, forgive me! How could I know it was Thee?"  
My very soul was shamed and bowed in the depths of humility.  
And He said, "The sin is pardoned, but the blessing is lost to thee;  
For, comforting not the least of Mine, thou hast failed to comfort Me."



# Joy in the Morning

"**D**EAR, dear, I am sorry. Do you really mean that he is going consumptive? I can't believe it; he looks so perfectly strong and well always, doesn't he?"

It was the vicar's wife who spoke. She and her husband had just returned from a short holiday abroad, and it was with evident distress she listened to her friend's report of the failing health of one of their most esteemed parishioners.

"So entirely fit and full of energy," she continued, looking across the little tea-table at her visitor.

"Yes, but he's not been himself for some time now," replied her friend. "Not eating properly and seeming tired on the least exertion, his wife says, so she insisted on his seeing Dr. Smith, and he told him that he had some mischief that might become serious if he continued to work in an office, and that he must lead an outdoor life for at least twelve months. So there it is, poor things; they were none too well off before, and now what they are going to do I'm sure I don't know. Certainly, some people do seem to have more than their share of trouble in this world."

"They do, indeed," said the Vicar's wife; "and sometimes one is tempted to wonder why it is generally the best who are called upon to bear so much sorrow. Only our faith teaches us that all is ordained by One who knows better than we do what burden each is able to bear; but it is truly sad about the Lawrences. I wonder what one can do to help them, poor things?"

"Very little, I'm afraid, except sympathise, and that Mr. Lawrence is not in the mood to welcome at present. He seems entirely to have gone to pieces since his interview with the doctor, and Mary says she can't rouse him. He simply sits and thinks with his head in his hands, and avoids meeting or speaking to any one. I'm sincerely grieved for her; but, as usual, she puts on a brave face."

"And always will, Emily, till the very end. She's one of the Saints of the Earth, if ever there was one, and it's a pity there are not more of us like her. But here's my husband coming up the path. You'll stay and have a chat with him, won't you?" and she pushed open the French window as she spoke.

The Vicar, a tall pleasant-faced man of some sixty years, crossed the neatly kept lawn, and,

removing his hat, stepped over the sill into the cheery little drawing-room.

"Just in time for tea, dear," said his wife, when he had shaken hands with his visitor. "Have you been down in the village already then?"

"Only to the post office, but I heard there something which greatly distresses me. Those poor Lawrences are in sad trouble again, and I want you to walk down there with me after tea. Emily, of course, has told you about them?"

"Yes; and oh, Henry, is there never to be an end to their troubles? Ever since they were married they have known nothing but adversity, and now if this should mean a complete break-up of health for him, what is there left for her to look forward to in the future?"

The Vicar was silent a moment, then—

"Heaviness may endure for a night,  
But joy cometh in the morning."

he said quietly. "And, my dear, be sure there is much joy stored up for poor Mary Lawrence and her husband some day, though it has pleased God that their path to it should lie through much tribulation. It is often those He loves best He chasteneth most, remember, and it is not for us to question the wisdom of His ways."

\* \* \* \*

It had turned out a cold dreary afternoon for the time of year, and John Lawrence—just returned from the second enforced outing of the day—coughed and shivered as he poked the fire into a more cheerful blaze, and, drawing his chair close up to it, sat down in the listless attitude that had become habitual of late.

Too tired and too sad to read, and debarred from his accustomed pipe, his thoughts travelled again over the previous ten years of his married life.

Two children had been born to him and his wife, little delicate things, who in spite of all care and comfort faded away in the early years of childhood. No others had come after to fill their empty places, and when later on through the treachery of a so-called friend he lost the small capital inherited from his mother, they thanked God their babies had been taken before their altered circumstances arose. Trouble after trouble had been theirs, and now had come the crowning blow of all. He shivered again as he thought of it, but at the sound of the

## Joy in the Morning

opening of the door, turned with an attempted smile to greet his wife.

"Well, Mary! got back again, dear?" he said, drawing another chair up beside him. "Sit down and tell me what you've been doing all the afternoon, you look so worn and tired out."

"Oh, I'll soon be rested, John," replied Mary Lawrence, who to the man she loved never owned to either weariness or pain. "It's really cold, you know, to-day, and I've been standing about; but I'll get tea now, dear, and then you shall hear why I wanted to go out alone this afternoon."

It took but a few minutes to get their simple meal, and when they had finished and drew up to the fire again, Mary Lawrence clasped her husband's hand in hers.

"John," she said, pressing his fingers close as she made a trembling confession, "you mustn't think I've acted unwisely, but I've just taken an allotment, dear."

"An allotment!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Why, Mary, who's going to work it for us? We can't afford to pay a man's labour, and I'm such a poor useless creature now."

"Don't, dear," said Mrs. Lawrence, with difficulty keeping back the tears.

The taking of the allotment would mean more work for her, but what matter? Her hands were already hardened by toil, her shoulders rounded by years of care and sorrow—they could well bear this further burden, and the doctor had been so emphatic.

"Keep him out of doors all day if you can, Mrs. Lawrence," he had said. "Give him something to do that will interest him and take his mind off himself. A few more months at office work may prove fatal; but let him follow my advice, and, please God, I sincerely believe we shall have him himself again in twelve months' time."

And so while the daylight faded around them that autumn evening, and the firelight softened the tired lines in her worn patient face, Mary Lawrence told her husband of the renewed hope that had led to the taking of the allotment.

"We are going to work it together, you and I, John," she said with an encouraging smile. "I shall get up earlier, and so long as it keeps dry we'll spend most of our days up there,



Digging away vigorously with his wife



## Joy in the Morning

taking dinner and tea with us, to eat in the open air; and there with God's blessing, my own dear husband, it is Dr. Smith's and my sincere belief you will in time be restored to perfect health again."

"My Mary," said John Lawrence quietly, raising her toil-roughened hand to his lips, "you were ever hopeful, dear, through all our troubles; and now you would take this extra work upon your shoulders, for the bigger share must, I fear, fall to your lot."

"Only for a time, John, till you are stronger," came the gentle reply; "and, dear, you must let me have my way in this."

"As in all else, Mary," he said as he stood up, and drawing her into his arms pressed his lips to hers. "You shall take me up there to-morrow, and, please God, your great unselfish love may be rewarded, dear."

\*       \*       \*       \*

The twelve months were nearly at an end and John Lawrence, as well and strong now as

the open-air life and comforts of an unexpected legacy could make him, was digging away vigorously beside his wife at the ground of their allotment. They were preparing it for the autumn planting, and in the minds of each as they worked arose the memory of that morning when for the first time they had taken possession there.

"A year ago to-morrow, Mary. I stood by idle while you turned the soil for our first planting," said John Lawrence, during a short rest, "and to-day I can thank God from the bottom of my heart, dear, that your unselfish love has been so richly rewarded."

"They that sow in tears  
Shall reap in joy,"

said Mary Lawrence reverently, lifting her eyes to her husband's, and in his heart was a great thankfulness that to him it had been given to find "that virtuous woman, whose price was far above rubies."

## The Tramp and the Baby

IT was a hot day and the road was dusty. A man was trudging along it with a slow and dragging step. His trousers were tucked into his boots, his hands were in his pockets, and beneath his left arm he carried a small bundle tied in a red handkerchief.

At the top of a hill he paused, raised his stooping shoulders, took off his hat and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. He stood for a while looking over the pleasant country, then turned to the left, where a gentle slope led down to a thick evergreen hedge. Beyond this was an enticing grove of young apple-trees, while still further along was a garden and lawn surrounding a handsome mansion. His eyes brightened at the sight.

"Looks like luck," he muttered. "People what live in such style as that ain't likely to turn a pore man away hungry. But the time," he added, glancing at the sun, "ain't strictly favourable. Say it's eleven o'clock; probably they'll have dinner at one, an' that's the right time for me to turn up at the back door. If I likes their looks I may come the wife 'n' four children dodge, an' get a basketful to carry away. Fortune knocks once on every man's door, they say; but misfortune knocks a good many times, an' gets the best look in."

He looked around him, scratched his head thoughtfully, and then, putting on his hat, stepped from the road to the grassy bank.

"Hedges and I is old chums," he muttered. "It'll be cool and shady 'longside o' this one, and a couple of hours' sleep won't hurt me a bit."

Languidly he made for a big beech that stood beyond the hedge, but threw its leafy shade far into the lane. Here, the grass being thick and velvety, seemed an ideal spot for a summer's nap. Our traveller threw down his bundle, took off his coat and rolled it into a pillow, and with a sigh of content lay at full length in the shade. Yet, quiet as the place was, he could not sleep, and he began to speculate on the reason for this.

"Let's see; I climbed into that haymow last night about sundown, an' slep' till after the farmer had milked his cows an' gone into the field to work—'bout fourteen hour, I guess. I needed the rest. Then I got seven eggs from the hens' nests, put 'em in my pocket and jogged along. I made a little fire in the wood: back there an' roasted 'em for breakfast. Then I jogged along here. Funny how I can't sleep!"

He lay upon his side, resting his head upon his elbow and staring absently at the broad landscape. Then he tired of this position and turned

## The Tramp and the Baby



**He suddenly grasped a bunch of stubbly whisker**

upon the other side ; but here the hedge stopped the view. So he sat up, yawned, and pulled a torn newspaper from his pocket. Lying again at full length, he flattened out the paper and read it, following the lines carefully and slowly with his finger. He was not a good scholar.

After a time he laid the paper down. "It's queer," he mused, "how they always hustle and bustle in the big cities ; an' how they sweats an' worries an' makes themselves miserable, jest to earn a living. People gits rich, sometimes, a-wrastlin' with business an' stocks, an' sich horrible things, but it don't do 'em no real good. They're so busy they can't spare a second to take life easy. For me, I don't want no money myself ; I'm better off as I am, seein' the world an' makin' the most of it. Money can't buy this soft cool grass all

aroun' me, the blue sky lookin' down through the trees, nor them birds a-whisperin' together at my elbow.

"I ain't what you might call respectable ; no, I s'pose not," with a solemn shake of his head ; "but I'm free an' my own master, an' when I wants to travel I jes' travel, an' when I wants to rest it's nobody's business but mine. City life may do for nervous folks an' idjits, but not for a feller what knows real life."

He brushed a fly from his nose, put the newspaper back in his pocket, and lay back on his makeshift pillow. The drowsy influence of the summer day stole over him, his eyes closed and he was nearly asleep when he was suddenly aroused by a voice uttering sounds to which he could give no meaning.

The man raised his head and looked about him



## The Tramp and the Baby

in sheer astonishment. There was nothing in sight, no beast, or bird, that could have uttered such language.

"Well, well! What——!" He broke off short and nodded his head. "It's t'other side the hedge. A calf; or a—a owl, or p'r'aps a——"

There was the voice again.

"I'm bothered if it's anything I ever heard tell of. Mebbe its ghosts, or rats, or—— h'm!"

His eye caught a place in the hedge near the ground where the growth had been pushed aside sufficiently to allow him to get through. He crawled to the spot, pushed his head through, and came to a sudden stop.

A yard from his head was a baby, sitting on a thick blanket and crowing to itself as it played with its bare toes. It was beautifully dressed, and chubby and sweet. A dozen yards away a hammock swung from between two trees, and half lying in it was a young woman with a nurse's cap on her head and a white apron thrown over her face. Her book had fallen to the ground; evidently the dreamy quiet of the summer day had lulled her to sleep.

The baby lifted its eyes suddenly and became aware of a head covered with matted hair and bristling whiskers, from which two mild blue eyes were staring into its own. The baby stared back. Its eyes were blue too. It laughed, crowed, and jumped its little body up and down with joy. Then it held out two tiny arms appealingly towards the tramp. It had found a new playfellow.

The man's eyes fell; he looked uneasily towards the hammock. The little one crowed again, more decidedly, and reached his hands as far as he was able towards his new acquaintance.

The expression of dismay on the tramp's face gave way to one of resolution. He stretched out his hands, clasped the baby firmly but gently, and drew it through the hedge.

The baby was delighted, and jumped and gurgled with joy. He had been left alone long enough, and here was a novel relief from playing with his rosy toes. The tramp smiled broadly and set the little one on his knee, steadying it there while he gazed upon it admiringly. There were two great smudges on the dainty dress, where his grimy hands had touched it. He never noticed them. The baby never noticed them. Both were alike in this respect—they were wholly indifferent to dirt.

The baby's sleeves were pinned with two heavy clasps—they were gold, or appeared to be. Another fastened the little bib to the waist. The man's eyes fell upon these, admired them

for a moment, and then came back to the face of his small comrade, whom he trotted gently upon his knee.

The baby squealed rapturously; the blue eyes danced with joy and mischief, and suddenly he grasped a bunch of stubbly whisker in each sturdy fist. The tramp chuckled softly and shook his head. The baby jumped and crowed and held on bravely. The man laughed. He gave the baby a bear-like hug that still was tender, and when the child struggled to be free the man got upon his hands and knees and swung the youngster upon his back.

A pair of fat hands instantly fastened themselves in his hair, and then slowly he moved round in a circle, the soft grass making a cushion for his hands, the baby crowing joyously at this improvised circus. Was ever such a jolly companion known?

But babies like change. The tramp put him on the ground; he espied the red bundle and reached both hands towards it. The tramp nodded, smiled, and gave him the bundle. The little hands turned it over and fumbled at the knots. The man laughed, reached within the bundle and brought out a breadcrust. This the baby seized, put it to his mouth, and smiled sweetly on his new friend.

A heavy sigh from the hammock behind the hedge fell on the tramp's ear. He started, glanced guiltily around, then turned to his playfellow with a smile. The little one was nibbling the bread contently. The man looked thoughtful and played with the gold clasps. Then he looked bashfully into the baby's face, hesitated, put up both his brown hands and pressed the whiskers away from his mouth in all directions, and then—he leaned forward and gently kissed the baby's soft white cheek.

He took the little one in his arms, crawled through the hedge, and placed the child upon its blanket, where it went on munching its crust. Then the man crawled back again and gathered up his belongings.

The nurse awoke with a start, looked quickly towards her charge, and was relieved to see the child still on the blanket where she had placed him. Standing up to stretch herself with a regretful yawn, her eyes reached above the hedge and caught the roadway beyond.

A tramp was jogging along through the dust, holding a small red bundle under his arm. He whistled as he walked, and the notes reached her ear through the hot air. She gave a little shiver.

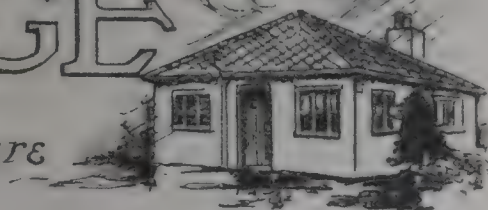
"Thank goodness he didn't come *this way*!" she exclaimed.





# ROCK COTTAGE

By *Eleanor Clare*



"YOU'LL be making a mistake, James, if you buy that house just because it's cheap. I tell you it's badly built; and for you to talk of patching it up where the signs of dilapidation are most evident and really require attention is throwing good money after bad. A fresh coat of paint and a few rooms repapered and whitewashed may give the house a look of newness, but wait until a severe winter sets in with bad weather and heavy rains, then you'll have a leakage in that roof, or a defective pipe, or some other damage. If you want to buy that house and get any satisfaction out of it, you'll have almost to rebuild it and put good work into it."

John paused to relight his pipe; and James drew his chair closer to the fire. It was a chilly October day. They occupied the long, narrow room at the top of the warehouse where they were employed. John, the elder, was a carpenter, and James, ten years younger, was a joiner. The room had a window at each end, and was divided down the centre by a green baize curtain, thus forming two cosy rooms—a kitchen and a bedroom.

"I'm sorry you've left off going to church," continued John, now that his pipe was aglow. "There's nothing like hearing the Gospel over and over again, for it teaches us to join good works to the hearing of the Word 'lest in the day of temptation we fall like an house built upon the face of the earth, without any foundation.' That's just what those jerry-built houses remind me of—a house on sand, for they certainly have no foundation, or very little. 'Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain who build it.'"

"If you're going to bring Scripture into it I'm off," replied James, drawing his hands from the blaze and putting them into his pockets. "You know my views. How are you going to spend the hundred pounds Uncle George left you?"

"I shall invest it in a house same as you. I shall buy Rock Cottage and marry Matilda. We've waited a long time, but I've never felt I could marry her till I could give her the kind of home she's accustomed to. She's accustomed to a parlour, you know; and the piano's hers. I've always looked forward to hearing her play hymns on Sundays in a home of our own. We'll have a nice fire in the parlour then, and I'll just sit and listen to her playing on it."

It was early closing day; and the whole afternoon had been spent talking about the money Uncle George had left them. Lights began to peep out in the tenement windows opposite; but they talked on, unaware of their own darkening room. It was five o'clock. James bent his head and put more coals on the fire, while John went on, beseeching him to spend his money wisely.

"The man who built Rock Cottage was a God-fearing man," he added; "a man who'd have scorned to put in bad work. Besides, father helped to build that house. I remember, I was just about five when I used to take his dinner; that's forty years ago. And now, like Moses who saw the promised land before his eyes—the land after which he had longed for forty years—now I behold my bit of land on which stands Rock Cottage." But his brother was halfway to the door. John called after him: "If you buy one of those bungalows you'll regret it, James! They're all without good workmanship. They were put up to sell at a profit, not to live in."

"I suppose I can do what I like with my own money. Uncle George didn't leave any particulars how we were to spend the hundred each he's left us. Fancy dying in America and leaving us each a hundred pounds? I'm not going to live in the bungalow, I'm going to let it," he exclaimed as he shut the door behind him.

The brothers got on together very well



## Rock Cottage

except when religion was discussed. John always tried to keep clear of any discussion, because it only led to argument, but whenever he felt anything very deeply religion was so much a part of his life that he could not help talking about it. It surprised John that his brother could not see for himself what a mistake it would be to buy the bungalow.

But James was thinking of the cheapness of it. He meant to pay down fifty pounds to a building society and keep the other fifty to play with. No putting all his eggs in one basket, he had muttered when John said he would put the hundred into the Building Society. James looked the elder, his hair was turning grey, and he had a heavy grey moustache, while John was dark and clean-shaven. The same dark eyes denoted the relationship.

Tapping the ashes out of his pipe, he put it in his pocket, then, turning on the gas, he drew back the curtain and picked up a Bible from his side of the dressing-table. The other side was covered with papers and pamphlets belonging to James.

John polished his spectacles before putting them on, then he turned to the seventh chapter of St. Matthew, verse twenty-four. After reading it, he shook his head, gravely.

He glanced at the clock. At seven he had an appointment with a man in regard to Rock Cottage which he wanted to purchase, so he closed his Bible and went out. Besides, he had to tell Matilda the good news. Matilda knew Rock Cottage, for they often passed it after the evening's service on Sundays. To think it was to be her own home was joy unspeakable. And the best of it was, John got it cheaper than he expected, because there was no water laid on in the house.

Matilda never forgot that first day she went through the house and decided where the piano should stand; and then they went out and saw the winding stream at the bottom of the garden. It formed the boundary line of their property, said John. In the spring he had water laid on in the house, and a wash-house built.

Rock Cottage was two miles away from the

warehouse. It meant that John had to go up by the morning train, and have a midday meal at a coffee house. But he did not mind that; Rock Cottage and the good wife who prepared his evening meal and gave him a welcoming kiss were well worth while.

Matilda was a neat little woman with rosy cheeks and loving dark eyes. She made John so happy that he wanted his brother to marry also. But James, who still lived at the warehouse, said he was too busy attending political meetings.

A few months passed uneventfully, the brothers just meeting at work, and James spending an occasional Sunday at the cottage. It was his habit to go in

time for dinner and to leave immediately after tea when John and his wife left the house for the two mile walk to the old church where they were married. But they could never persuade him to go with them.

One tea-time, however, he was grumbling that three of the window-sash cords had broken already.

"Haven't you noticed," his brother replied, "how badly the windows are fixed in? They're all alike!—bad workmanship. It's a great strain even on sash-cords."

"And that stump of a tree at the back is lifting up the tiles. The house seems to have no foundation," said James as he helped himself to more cold ham.

John and his wife exchanged a glance, but John was too kind and sorry to say, "I told you so."

"Come and put your troubles before the Lord, man," he said. "He will guide you if you turn to Him, and will counsel you as to what's best to be done as regards your bungalow."

But James shook his head.

"I don't believe that God's interested in human affairs," he replied.

"What about Rock Cottage?" exclaimed Matilda.

"John's always been a discerning man," was the reply.

"Yes. But why?" she went on. "Because he's a God-fearing man! Isn't it so? Come to church with us?"

### REAL WORTH

*"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—PROV. iv. 18.*

The sterling man, not always rich,  
But valuable in any niche,  
May not shine as his showy brothers,  
But gains sincere esteem from others.  
He takes no shady road to wealth;  
No secret sin destroys his health.  
He's upright, faithful, just, and true,  
A man of honour through and through.  
Happy the man who calls him friend,  
Truly he may on him depend.  
In days of trial and distress,  
He may his friend's religion bless,  
Which changes sinful hearts on earth,  
Filling with deeds of noble worth.

E. DEAN.



## Rock Cottage

But James just turned away in the opposite direction.

Time went on. The winter had set in very severe, and when the brothers met James's perpetual complaint was that he never had his hand out of his pocket paying out for repairs. The extra pounds had disappeared like magic.

"I said all there was any need to say before you bought the bungalow, James, but you wouldn't be advised. I'll think over what's best to be done now. If you'd only join me in prayer——"

But James turned impatiently away.

The following Saturday night there was a heavy storm of wind and rain; it stripped the leaves from the trees in the garden at Rock Cottage. They were lying in sodden heaps upon the ground.

"I wonder how the bungalow fared last night?" said Matilda, while they were having breakfast.

John did not reply. He was not surprised when James arrived an hour earlier than usual looking very miserable indeed. The brothers looked at one another steadily for a moment, then James began:

"The rain fell, and the floods came, and the

winds blew and beat upon that house—and—and it fell."

"You're telling us what's in the Bible, James! Tell us exactly what's happened at the bungalow?"

"Why, that! Just what I've said. I wasn't thinking of the Bible at all. Though funnily enough I've said it in the words I learned at Sunday school, or nearly. Anyway, it's all over now. I've got no bungalow. The tenants were after me pretty early this morning for damage to their furniture. A wall fell in. It's a wonder they were not killed, they say."

Matilda opened the Bible.

"Look, James, your very words!" she said earnestly.

James read the seventh chapter and twentieth verse of St. Matthew with a sharp intake of breath. There was a tense silence. Then he read aloud the twenty-fourth verse: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."

"That's you, John!" he exclaimed. Then,

with a deepening of the voice, he continued: "And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

"Ay! and that's me! sure enough! I never thought before, how the Lord takes an ordinary human experience and teaches us a lesson on it. I'll come to-night to church with you. I've lost my money, but I've learned a valuable lesson."

And he never forgot that lesson. For a time he lived at Rock Cottage, for he loved to dwell on the Word with Matilda and John, and to join in the hymns on Sunday afternoons; but after a while he married.



"A wall fell in. It's a wonder they were not killed"



## Who sent the Money ?



“**W**HAT *can* I do?” and Mrs. Graham sighed a big sigh; there was no one to hear her, but she spoke these words just for relief.

Mrs. Graham was standing in her little kitchen; it was quite a tiny place, but spotlessly clean. Poor woman! her heart was very heavy. Only six months before this time she had lost her husband, on whom she had leaned for ten years of happy married life, and now he was taken after a long illness, and the little sum of money he had saved for a rainy day was nearly

exhausted by the time the funeral expenses were paid.

She had taken in washing to help support herself and her two young children, but she was always delicate, and the long strain of nursing had told much on her, so that she could hardly cope with the work, and gradually that source of income ceased.

Her purse was empty, the cupboard bare, how could she feed her two little ones? No wonder the cry went up, “What *can* I do?”

Now Mrs. Graham was a Christian, and though she had been sorely tried her faith had not failed. Even now she felt there was one thing she *could* do, she could pray. So, kneeling down at the kitchen table, she told her Heavenly Father all about her trouble. Rising from her knees her heart felt less heavy, and she said to herself, “I can’t do anything, but *God* can.”

At that moment Archie and Eva ran in; they had been at play outside.

“Now you must get ready for school,” said Mother, trying hard to banish her anxious thoughts, and not let them guess her trouble. “Come upstairs, I will help you.”

As she watched the children down the street she thought to herself, “Little they think that there will be no dinner for them to-day, poor dears!”

Scarcely had she closed the door when there came a sharp knock. She answered the summons, and found a gentleman, quite a stranger, standing on the threshold.

“Does Mrs. Graham live here?” he asked.

“Yes, sir, that’s me,” she answered.

“Then this is for you,” and he took an envelope out of his breast pocket

## Who sent the Money?

and handed it to her. She took it wonderingly, and almost before she could say "thank you" he was gone.

She turned it over in her hand. "For me! what can it be?"

Then in the kitchen she opened the mysterious envelope and found two five-pound notes.

She gasped in amazement.

Who could have sent them? Then falling down on her knees just where she had knelt in sore distress only a short half-hour before, she poured out her heart in thanksgiving to God Who had not failed her in her dark hour. After Mrs. Graham had got a little over her astonishment she put on her hat and coat, and taking with her one of the precious notes she repaired to the store close by, and bought there the dinner that she never expected to eat. *Who sent the money she had no idea, but she felt sure it was meant for her; there could be no mistake about it.*

I must take you now to a very different home from the one I first introduced you to. In a large luxuriously furnished room with shaded lamps which shed a soft pink glow over it, there sat three people—a gentleman whose benevolent face was a true index to his heart, his sister, and a London city missionary. The last named had been telling his listeners a very sad tale of a poor woman who had lost her husband, and who was left with two young children, and was struggling with great poverty.

He drew such a pathetic picture of the mother and little ones being brought

lower and lower through this grinding poverty that both were deeply stirred, and to some purpose too, as we shall see. This was just six weeks before that wonderful day in Mrs. Graham's life. And then it seemed as though this gentleman and his sister had forgotten the sad tale, but it was to be revived in their minds.

That very morning that the widow was feeling the burden so heavily Mr. Ives (the gentleman we have heard of) came downstairs very early, and shortly after his sister came down also, some time before the breakfast hour.

"I could not rest for thinking of that poor woman Mr. Orton told us about; that is why I am down so early," said Mr. Ives.

"How strange, Robert," his sister answered; "I too could not sleep last night, that poor soul was so on my mind. I mean to send her five pounds, that will be some little help—I only wish I had done so before."

"And I too will give her five pounds. As soon as we have finished breakfast I will go to Mr. Orton and ask him for her address, and then I will take it to her myself. Poor woman, won't she be delighted?" and Mr. Ives chuckled at the thought of the pleasure it would give.

And that was how it was that the poor widow came to get the help that she so badly needed.

Does not this true story show us that God's promise is sure, "*Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.*"

LOUISA GOODWIN

### THE INGLE NOOK

The west glows red,  
And overhead  
The crescent moon shines clear;  
Low sinks the sun,  
The day is done,  
The starry night is here;  
Now for the gate beyond the brook,  
The firelight in the ingle nook.

The nightjar cries,  
The sweet day dies,  
Awake and sing, my heart;  
For gay and glad,  
Or dark and sad,  
Each moment must depart:  
But love can never pass away,  
It lasts beyond the longest day.

NORA C. USHER



# What it Says

I WAS staying all through the week in the old town of Greenock.

Every Saturday night I walked to our quiet village to spend the Sabbath at home with father and mother and the rest of them. The minister's son and I were great chums.

We used to talk together about a lot of things, and, among others, how we could become true Christians. We agreed we would try to find out, and I wrote one evening to my minister. I said something like this :

"Here is a text which says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' I believe in Jesus Christ. I am no atheist nor blasphemer. I believe all about Him, but I do not feel one bit the better for it."

Two or three days passed when the postman came round and gave me a letter. I looked at the postmark, and saw it was from the minister. I knew his handwriting. I shall never forget reading that letter. It read :

"You will never know how glad I am to get such a frank, open, honest letter from you about your spiritual condition, even although evidently you are all in the dark. I am glad you have taken Acts xvi. 31 as a challenge text. It is a good one, and I join controversy with you there. You say you believe all about Jesus Christ, but you do not feel a bit the better. Now, I want to know what I am to believe about you. Am I to believe you in saying 'I don't feel a bit the better,' or am I to believe God uttering His verdict on you in the Word that can never lie, that the man who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is saved?"

I was checking all God's Word by my feelings, and reducing all God's

Word, no matter what it said, to the level of my feelings, and I did not see that was no faith at all. And the minister clenched it when he said :

"You quote the text, Acts xvi. 31, as if it read, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will feel better,' instead of 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' God says it. Never mind your feelings."

It was like the lifting of a curtain for me. It was a case of believing Jesus, no matter what I felt, or didn't feel. I saw I was saved, but I didn't shout. I took a walk in the station, along to the far end of the platform. I remember that morning saying to myself, "Has the station been white-washed?" The very dingy brick wall, all covered with smoke and soot from the engines, looked whiter.

It was not the walls, it was my mind that was brightened. Because now, in the Scriptural sense, I knew the Lord as mine.

The next morning when I awoke up my heart was just like a fire you had left to burn out overnight, and I was as cold as could be. The Devil said, "It's all a hoax." But I got grace to fight that battle. The minister said I was not to consult my feelings, and I rallied myself.

"Has God's Word altered through the night?" "No!"

"Has Acts xvi. 31 altered?" "No!"

"Has the value of the blood of Jesus to blot out my sins altered?" "No!"

"Then nothing has altered that I am resting on, nothing but my feelings. You are saved by trusting the Lord Jesus Christ." . . .

JOHN McNEILL



# LIGHT IN THE HOME

No. 17. NEW SERIES


NOVEMBER, 1925



"Seeming to bear a charmed life"

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# Turner's Tenements.

By AMOS E. DENNER

THE directory once gave "Turner's Tenements" a more high-sounding name, but, the two hundred or more families dwelling in the huge red-brick building, never called it anything but "Turner's Tenements."

Of course, they have a reason, and may-be that reason will bear recounting.

Much good-humoured banter always prevails amongst London's working classes, and when the neighbours of the Tenements knew that one of their number, young Joe Burnett, had commenced work in the local pickle factory, it was but natural that from henceforth he should be dubbed "Pickles," and that Nellie Cleaver, the girl of his heart, should receive the additional nickname of "Violet."

"I call these 'ere nicknames a reglar bit o' saucy imperdence, Mr. Turner," protested Joe's mother to the missionary, when he called one day. He took a particular interest in the young fellow, especially since Joe had championed the efforts which had been made to establish a regular open-air meeting in the building square.

Not that Joe was a definite Christian at the time, but rather his action was prompted by a sense of fairness and appreciation of the many good and kindly deeds which the missionary was ever doing in the best interest of the Tenement folk.

"What, if my Joe *do* work in a pickle place," went on the old lady indignantly; "ain't that better than being on the dole like a lot o' young chaps round 'ere? I could mention one name in pertickler," she prattled, getting visibly more angry; "that there hulking Jim Robson . . . 'im wot used to be Joe's pal, before the lad started walking out wi' Nellie Cleaver . . . 'e's

the ringleader in this nickname bisness, an' 'e ain't done no work for over a year. . . . Too lazy to hunt for it, in my opinion." Here the old lady got very red in the face. "The only thing 'e *do* get busy about is trying to steal the girl away from my Joe. . . . I caught 'im talking wi' the lass the other day," she went on, her voice rising with every word, "an' I only wish I'd got my gamp wi' me, I'd 'ave learnt the good-for-nothing. . . ."

"Hold on! Mrs. Burnett," broke in the missionary, struggling hard to keep a sober countenance: "you good ladies are nearly all alike, when you have anything to say. You travel at such a pace that I find it difficult to keep up with you. . . . I thought you were going to offer me a cup of tea when next I called;" and Thomas Turner seated himself in a cosy chair, having long ago proved an adept at making himself at home with his Tenement "parishioners."

Mention of tea worked wonders with Mrs. Burnett, and soon the comely soul was busy with kettle and cups.

"I always did have the praise of being able to make a good cup," asserted the old body, with a touch of pride, as she reached for the caddy. "When my dear husband was alive, 'e used to call me 'Jinnie Best-brew,' all playful like, an' I must say as how I liked to hear 'im say it, because . . . well, you'll understand, Mr. Turner, . . . 'twas a bit o' affection like." A tear was deftly flicked away from the corner of Mrs. Burnett's eye, but not before the missionary had noted how matters stood.

"Two lumps, if you please, Mrs. Burnett," he said pleasantly, in reply to her questioning look: "now just sit down for a moment and enjoy this really excellent cup of 'Jinnie's Best-brew.' Don't worry your head about this nickname of Joe's. It is only a passing joke, and there's no real harm in it after all."

## Turner's Tenements

And don't surmise too much about this stealing of Nellie."

"All very well for you to talk like that Mr. Turner," said the old lady; "but how would you like folk to be calling you names that you wasn't christened?" She stirred her tea vigorously, and went on: "Perhaps you don't understand the nasty idea behind the minds of the folk. . . . 'Tis bad enough when they calls my Joe 'Pickles,' but when it comes to calling 'is young lady 'Violet,' well, that's a lot worse, because may-be you're not aware that violets is but a vulgar name for onions . . . and I tell you straight, I don't like it at all."

The missionary's hearty laugh was interrupted by a knock on the door.

"Sounds like the rent-man," commented Mrs. Burnett, rising to her feet. But she was mistaken. Instead, it was a neighbour, obviously in great distress.

"Oh! Mrs. Burnett," shouted the poor woman, agitatedly, "can you come across to my place at once . . . there's something gone wrong with the gas, and the kitchen is all in flames! and—— Good heavens! What's that fearful noise?"

Well might the frightened woman ask, for at that moment a terrific explosion shook the foundations of the Tenements to their very depths. Instantly, all the windows in the place splintered into countless atoms, and lumps of plaster and brickwork commenced to fall about in alarming fashion, whilst the shouts and screams of the terror-stricken colony folk as they rushed panic-stricken toward the main passages, was unforgettable.

Then another tremendous explosion occurred, this time reducing the whole of the front part of the building to a mass of flaming ruins, and burying over a score of inhabitants in the wreckage. In the distance, the clanging of bells told of fire-engines dashing to render aid, but long before these arrived, the missionary attached to the Tenements had been busy. And so had Jim Robson, the "good-for-nothing."

\* \* \* \*

Two hours later, Thomas Turner opened his eyes to consciousness in a doctor's surgery.

If he had been asked just then, how he came to be there, he would have found it difficult to make definite reply, and, moreover, if he had been questioned as to the number of people whom he had carried out of the blazing Tenements, he probably would have smiled, and hinted that the matter need not be discussed.

But a certain chief official of the fire brigade

would doubtless have had quite a different story to tell of the brave missionary who, seeming to bear a charmed life, dashed again and again into the blazing ruins, pulling the unfortunate inmates to safety, only at the last to drop unconscious, when it was known that every dweller in the Tenements had been rescued.

\* \* \* \*

The day duly arrived when the Tenement inhabitants "moved back" to their rebuilt home. Rumours had reached Mr. Turner of something lively being likely to happen on this auspicious occasion, and he was particularly interested to receive a note from young Joe Burnett, inviting him to be present on the "moving back" day, because that event was being celebrated in proper fashion by his wedding with Nellie Cleaver.

All the inhabitants seemed crowded into Mrs. Burnett's rooms when he arrived, and every one seemed talking at once, until called to order by no less a person than Jim Robson.

"You've made me chairman of this meeting," the young fellow began nervously, "and if you people don't keep quiet. . . ." Here, a good-natured laugh went up from the audience.

"Get on with the programme, Jimmy," shouted some one, good-naturedly, and without more ado, Jim Robson said:

"The first item on the agenda is a speech by Mr. Joseph Burnett." Instantly there were shouts of "good old 'Pickles,'" and as Joe rose to speak, a hush fell over the crowd.

"Friends," he began hesitatingly, "speaking is not much in my line, but I would be a poor sort if I didn't stand up and say something about our chairman, after the way he rescued my mother from certain death in that terrible explosion. . . . Mr. Turner here, was busy with the other folk, but Jim was busy too, and if he hadn't climbed over a mass of blazing timber and worked like a trojan to get my mother out." . . . But the speaker could get no further, by reason of the great cheer that burst forth, and also, because of a choking in his own throat.

Then, amidst the general confusion, Joe Burnett awkwardly handed Jim Robson a substantial cheque subscribed for by the Tenement folk, together with a letter setting forth their appreciation of a brave man's deed in the "hour of supreme peril."

"He's going to be 'best man' at my wedding presently!" exclaimed Joe, beamingly, "and I'm also glad to say that I've fixed up a job for



## Turner's Tenements

him at the pickle factory, now that I've been made foreman."

Again there was another burst of cheering, and, after it had subsided, Joe went on:

"Seeing that our chairman seems a bit 'off his bearings,' I beg to suggest that my mother now has something to say to our old friend Mr. Turner, whom we're all delighted to see with us to-day."

"Cheerio! Grannie," yelled the crowd, now thoroughly worked up; "go on, tell the missionary what we think of him, too."

"Seems as though we're all too excited to say things proper-like," stuttered the old lady, happily, "but 'tis quite sure if 'twern't for God's mercy in giving us a missionary like Mr. Turner, several of us folks wouldn't be 'ere to-day. I —"

But what a pity that tears came and spoiled the old lady's carefully prepared speech, because there was so much she wanted to tell, including the very pleasing fact that the Tenement folk had put heads and hearts together, and had managed to influence the Building company to set aside a large room once used as a work-shop, but now to be given over to Mr. Turner for the purposes of a Mission Hall, thus supplying a long and much-prayed-for consummation of his Gospel work.

Old Mrs. Burnett, however, did manage to control her feelings sufficiently to be able to ask the missionary's acceptance of a beautiful Bible, suitably and becomingly inscribed to "Our best friend."

"God bless you, sir!" she exclaimed, her face shining with tears of joy. "This is a great day for all of us, and, though I ain't a believer in some sort of names, as you know, yet I'm real glad that our folk be going to alter the name of our Building out of respect and love for you. So in future, this place is to be known as 'Turner's Tenements' because, somehow we feel that you cares for us body and soul. . . ."

"Three cheers for dear old Grannie Burnett," shouted some one in the crowd. "Hurry up! or else we shall be late for Joe's wedding."

"Mind you ain't late for the opening service of our new Mission Hall next Sunday," retaliated the old soul, happily. "You've all promised faithfully to come. . . . No playing truant."

And sure enough they all kept their word, but best of all, Joe Burnett and his newly-made wife, together with Jim Robson, were amongst those who received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour in that crowded happy Gospel service.

## The Unknown Warrior

THESE three words were on the lips of old and young, rich and poor, as London, the hub of the world, performed the homage due to the heroes who for their country fought and died. King George, Queen Mary, with other Royal persons, statesmen, great soldiers and sailors, bowed their heads as the man without a name was borne to his honoured resting-place in Westminster Abbey. Such mourners had the Unknown Warrior on the day of his burial in the place of kings and heroes.

Why should this ceremony take place on Armistice Day? Because, as Sir W. Robertson has well said: "Armistice Day recalls the fact that victory was purchased at the cost of untold sufferings, and of the lives of 700,000 brave men and boys."

Now is it not true that we owe much to the "unknown"? Not only to the unknown soldier occupying a nameless grave, but to the many unknown workers who minister to our comfort and need.

As I sit by a warm fire I am indebted to the unknown miner who, at risk of life and limb, laboured for my benefit. My daily bread is provided by the unknown farm labourer; and to an unknown worker on some distant plantation I am indebted for the refreshing tea I drink.

I would remind my readers of Another, Who, I regret to say, is as unknown to-day to many as He was when John the Baptist said to the deputation from Jerusalem: "There standeth one among you whom YE KNOW NOT," "the Living God, Who is the Saviour of all men."

Think *how much we owe Him*—the love that sought us, the precious blood that bought us; and yet many who have experienced wonderful deliverances, "know Him not."

All admire the sacrifice of gallant lads who willingly laid down life itself for comrade or principle, but all human sacrifice comes short of the love of Christ, Who "died for the ungodly." Our Divine Saviour laid aside His

## The Unknown Warrior

glory, became man, died the death of the Cross. Truly, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Yes, but Christ died for His enemies.

At the beginning of the war a mining engineer, with good prospects, returned to England to fight for the Old Country. His employers offered him a more lucrative post to remain in their service, but he refused. He soon obtained his commission, and his practical experience as a mining engineer more than once saved the lives of his men. One day a soldier, mining below, failed to return. This young officer descended in search of the missing man, and found him lying senseless, overcome by gas fumes. Dragging him out he eventually carried him with difficulty up a forty-rung rope ladder, and as he reached the top, strong and willing hands eased him of his burden. Having fulfilled his task, he suddenly was overcome himself by the gas fumes, and, losing his hold, fell back and broke his neck.

Now what was the character of the man for whom he died? He was proved to be a drunken wastrel, and we are ready to exclaim: "What a sacrifice for such an unworthy object!" Yes, indeed, it was; and I would add: the Saviour Who, sad to say, is *Unknown* to many, made a greater sacrifice for more unworthy objects. "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the JUST FOR THE UNJUST, that He might bring us to God."

May the honour justly paid to the thousands of unknown soldiers lead many to think of the honour due to the One of Whom it is written: "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

A soldier whose life had been saved at the expense of another found the relatives of the man who died, to offer his grateful thanks. May we not be less grateful, but "thank God for His unspeakable gift," Christ our Saviour.

W. J. PRENTICE



A Coalies' Service on Armistice Day at King's Cross G.N.R. Coal Depot. A coal van does duty as a pulpit



# “Why?”

By LUCY LAING

MARY MASON was just twenty. So young, so beautiful, and yet an invalid whose sufferings were terrible. Sometimes for days on end little could be done to allay her pain, and, brave though she was, there were times when she began to question—“Why?”

Twilight shadows were stealing into her bedroom at the close of one beautiful day, and Mary, lying quite alone upon her bed, watched them fretfully. Her thoughts had been sadder than usual to-day. What could the reason be for her long-continued affliction?

Gradually the shadows lengthened until darkness almost came, and then, suddenly, her room seemed to be filled with a strange light. A beautiful form bent over her, and she was conscious that words—

sweet and low—were being addressed to her.

“Mary, daughter of sorrow, art thou impatient?”

She seemed not to be nervous at all, but to answer quite naturally:

“Yes, for I am full of pain, and disease, and I see no end. I cannot understand either why I am made to suffer so much. When I was fifteen I came to Christ as my Saviour, and have trusted Him ever since. Oh—why can He thus deal with me?”

The shadowy form bent a little nearer, and spoke again:

“Come with me, dear child, and I will show thee.”

Mary smiled sadly.

“Alas! I cannot walk,” she answered.

“True! I know. There, gently; so!”

She felt arms, tender, yet strong, lifting her, and then she seemed to be carried over land and sea until her guide set her down in a far off city in the midst of a large workshop. The room was full of windows, and the workmen, each with his own tools, were so intent upon their work that they did not notice the new-comers. They all appeared to be working upon small brown pebbles, grinding, shaping, polishing.

Mary was specially interested in one worker who seemed to be more earnest even than the others. He had a half-polished pebble—which was now seen to be a diamond—in a strong pair of pincers. He seemed to grasp the thing as if he would crush it, and to hold it on to the grindstone without mercy. The stone whirled, the dust flew, and the jewel grew smaller and lighter. Every moment or so he would pause, hold it nearer the light and examine it minutely. Mary found herself more and more interested.

## WORK OUT THY WILL

For every cloud that has darkened my way,  
For every night that has led to the day,  
Father, I thank Thee,—for such is the road  
That leads from ourselves to the glory of God.  
Lord, for the sake of Thy glory, I pray,  
Work out Thy will in my life day by day,  
Till Thou canst see, 'mid the toil and the strife;  
Thine own lovely image displayed in my life.

J. M. C.

“Workman,” she asked at last, “will you tell me why you bear on so and grind the jewel so hard?”

He glanced at her kindly, and answered:

“I want to grind off every flaw and crack in it.”

“But don't you waste it?”

“Yes, although what is left is so much more valuable. This diamond—if it will stand the wheel long enough—is going to have a very important place in the crown we are making up for our king. We take much more pains with such, and grind and polish them at great length; but when done they are very beautiful. The king was here yesterday, and was much pleased with our work, and he set special store by this particular jewel, and wanted it ground and polished a great deal. So you see how hard I hold it down on this stone. And, look, there is not a flaw in it! What a beauty it will be!”

The scene seemed to fade, and Mary felt herself being lifted up into those strong arms once more, and then laid down upon her own bed of pain.

“My daughter,” that voice asked again, “dost thou understand the vision?”

She looked up with shining eyes.

“Yes, oh yes; but may I ask one question?”

“Certainly.”

“Were you sent to show me all this?”

“I was.”

“And may I console myself with the knowledge that I am a diamond, and am now

## "Why?"

in the hands of the strong man who is to polish it for the King's crown?"

"My child, thou mayest have that consolation, and every pang of suffering shall be like a flash of lightning in a black night, revealing

eternity to thee; and, hereafter thou shalt run without weariness, walk without faintness, and sing with those who have 'come out of great tribulation.' Remember that the promise is to those 'that shall endure to the end'!"

## Losing Time

OLD Peter Parslow, the village watch and clock repairer, was hurrying home from Sunday school, for the wind was cold, and he had been suffering from a nasty attack of bronchitis. Several young fellows were lounging upon a stile, and smoking cigarettes as he came along, but they were evidently just dispersing, for only one remained when he came up.

"Hallo, George, my boy," he said cheerily; "how are you? You are such a stranger now!"

George Coxon looked a little shamefaced.

"I'm quite well, thank you, Mr. Parslow; how are you? You sound a bit wheezy."

The old man drew his muffler more closely round his throat.

"My old trouble, George; and then—I'm getting on in years; shan't be any use much longer."

"Oh, go on," laughed George.

"It's true; we want the young ones to come along and help, and give us old fellows a rest. Don't be hurt, my boy, at what I'm going to say, but—you aren't losing your old joy, are you?"

The young man flushed and looked uncomfortable.

"What makes you ask that?" he queried.

"Oh, the usual signs, you know. When you left my class I had such hopes of you, and then—gradually your appearances at the old place became less and less, and you seem to have lost interest altogether lately; we scarcely ever see

you now, George. What is the reason? Tell your old friend, perhaps he can help you."

George tried to laugh the matter off, however.

"Don't worry about me," he said. "I'm not worth it. I expect I'm what you call a backslider."

"Oh, my dear boy," the old man cried, "it breaks my heart to hear you talk so. Can you come along the road a bit? I mustn't stop in this wind."

"Sorry, I'm waiting for a friend; but you push on, and—don't trouble about me; I'm not worth it."

A few mornings later when old Peter looked suddenly up from his work he saw George Coxon standing in the doorway. They chatted for a few minutes, and then George said:

"I've really come about my watch, Mr. Parslow; it's been losing time lately."

The old man took the offender and opened it up, examining it critically under his glass.

"Oh yes," he said at length; "we can soon make that all right, George. I hope it will be as easy to remedy your trouble, my boy."

"My trouble, Mr. Parslow?"

The old man looked at him steadily and significantly for a moment.

"Haven't *you* lost time lately, George? Hasn't that been the trouble?"

They were only just a few words, but in God's hands they were the means of restoring George Coxon to repentance, to the church, and to duty.

## Rest

WHEN the skies are dark and low'ring,  
We would see the sunshine still,  
For behind the clouds, there hideth  
But the working of His will.

All the pain, and all the sorrow,  
Do but carry out His plan;  
And the clouds are filled with blessings,  
If we trust Him, and we can.

Then the skies, so black and dreary,  
Will give place to brighter hue;  
Clouds will vanish—for 'tis His way,  
As the sun comes shining through.

So we journey on, well knowing  
His will, plan, and way are best;  
And our loving Father helps us  
Thus, each day, in Him to rest.



# "Never in Time"



LUCY JAMES from her basement window could only see the whitewashed wall tunnelled out a few feet distant from the window, and a bit of the black trunk of the chestnut-tree in the garden above. She could not even see the branches—only a few remaining leaves that fluttered down and lodged in the corners just outside her window. Not a sound reached her; for it was the back basement.

It was a dark, dreary November day with not a break in the clouds; but the dreariness was all outside, at present; for the round table in the centre of the room was gay with scraps of blue, pink, and green material; and there, on Lucy's bed opposite the window, were a dozen dolls waiting to be dressed.

It was not yet eleven o'clock, but Lucy had been obliged to light the lamp. It burned brightly—so far. And as she measured some pink flannelette to make a nightgown for the big doll in the centre, she cast uneasy glances towards a large brown paper parcel by the door. It was a private order for cretonne cushion covers that ought to have been delivered last night; but they were not finished in time.

Lucy's work, really, was to make loose covers for furniture, but the firm who gave her orders could not employ her regularly, so she earned a little extra, dressing dolls. November was a busy month, for Christmas was coming, and Lucy had to dress the dolls for the shop window.

The large doll with real black hair had to be finished first. It was a special order—a present for a little girl who was just recovering from pneumonia, and, as it was her birthday the following day, it had to be delivered that night. Lucy intended to take the parcel of covers at the

same time. As she worked at the little sleeve on the gown, she pictured the child for whom it was intended. She had been sent to the lady's house with some dolls for the little girl to choose one.

She recalled the pretty face on the pillow and the child's eager eyes and flushed cheeks as she handed back the doll: "Bring her beau'fully dressed for my birthday on Thursday—Thursday! Don't forget." And Lucy had departed with the treasure.

The lamp was burning dim, and she discovered that it needed refilling. The room was getting darker; evidently a heavy fog was falling. She rose and groped about in a corner under the window for the paraffin oil-can; and was horrified to find it was empty! She would soon be in total darkness; and with so much work to do! What was to be done?

Miss Wain, her landlady, who occupied the front basement, had warned her how important it was never to be out of oil when one lived in a basement, especially during the dark winter days. In fact, she only charged her a few shillings a week for the room because of the expense she would have with oil.

She glanced wistfully at the paper parcel by the door. The cushion covers had been finished the previous night, but as she called with them an hour later than she was expected the lady was out. She had to bring them back again; consequently, she did not receive the money due to her. Just because she was not in time! Miss Wain was out, so there was nothing to do but to wait until she returned.

Now she was without money and without oil, and she would have to disappoint that little girl. That was worst of all! It would



## "Never in Time"

be bad enough to be scolded about the cushions—but that little girl! She wished she could be like Miss Wain, and wondered why her friend was so different: "She's never short of oil, or anything else!" she murmured to herself.

It was nearly one o'clock before she heard Miss Wain let herself in. She waited a moment, then groped her way to the door, for the light had now gone right out. After stumbling against a chair she found herself in the passage.

"Come in," called Miss Wain cheerfully, in answer to her knock.

So Lucy opened the door just as Miss Wain was turning up the wick of her own lamp.

"Oh, Miss Wain! I haven't any oil; and it's too dark to sew. Will you lend me some until I have some money? Yes! I know it's rent day," she added, as Miss Wain started in surprise, "but I went with that parcel too late last night."

"I told you you'd be late!"

"I hope it doesn't matter about the rent until this evening?" exclaimed Lucy, looking distressed.

"I wasn't thinking of that. I don't pay my rent until to-morrow, so I can wait. Haven't you any money? Not even to get a drop of oil?" Lucy's doleful face was reply enough. So Miss Wain gave a short, but good-natured laugh. "We are a poor lot round here!" she said. "I can't lend you any, Lucy, neither oil nor money, because my last week's shirt-making hasn't been paid for yet. Say! bring your work in here, as long as it's necessary to keep the lamp burning. Have you left your dinner on?"

"I haven't put it on yet. I've only got some butter beans, a carrot, and an onion."

"I've got Irish stew to-day. A bit left from yesterday. Say! bring your beans,

and carrot, and onion an' I'll do them in my stew and we'll share it, for it doesn't look as if the fog'll lift for some time."

"You are good!" murmured Lucy, her eyes beaming.

"You are just like one o' those foolish virgins we read of in Scripture."

Lucy had reached the door, but she turned round, startled.

"What a funny idea! Whatever——"

"A very good idea!" laughed Miss Wain. "Go and get your work and don't waste any more time. Take the candle off the dresser."

Lucy took the candle, and presently returned with the materials and the prepared vegetables in a basin. Miss Wain immediately put them into her own saucepan which simmered on the bar.

By and by the two women were busy with their tasks.

Miss Wain's basement was more cheerful, for there was the sound of passing footsteps; and when one looked up one could see the soles of people's shoes. It never failed to amuse Miss Wain. She had the same pale complexion as her friend, but her hair was black and wavy. She wore it parted in the middle and drawn into a neat coil at the back of her head.

"Say! It'd make such a difference to you if you could learn to be in time."



"Oh, Miss Wain! I haven't any oil; and it's too dark to sew. Will you lend me some?"



## “Never in Time”

“I’m never in time, I know. It makes me really unhappy sometimes. How I am going to help disappointing that little girl I told you about I don’t know!” And Miss Wain could tell by the break in her voice that she felt it very much. But Lucy, fearing another scolding, said in a different tone: “What colour do you think I should make the doll’s dress?”

“Oh! Pink; because it’s got black hair.”

“But the nightgown’s pink.”

“Well, the doll won’t have them on at the same time. You foolish girl!”

“You called me a foolish virgin before, but I can’t see what that old story’s got to do with me. I remember hearing a sermon about it last February. It came in the Lesson that Sunday. The preacher said according to the Eastern custom, they should have met the bridegroom with the burning torches, but though they had brought their lamps they had no oil in them, and were in great trouble and tried at the last moment to borrow the necessary oil from those who had been more thoughtful.”

“Yes, but the oil in Scripture has a deeper meaning,” Miss Wain replied gravely.

“I don’t remember the preacher saying so.”

“He was sure to! I expect you arrived too late to hear him say that part; or perhaps you were not listening then. That parable means a lot.”

“Do please tell me all about it. We are so different, because you are a wise virgin and I am a foolish one; all the same, I cannot understand why they couldn’t have lent them some oil.”

“But there wouldn’t have been enough to go round! But it means more—much more!” exclaimed Miss Wain earnestly. “I’ve heard it put much plainer.”

The room had lightened and the lamp now burned dim, so Miss Wain turned it out.

“Now we’ll have dinner,” she said; “then you must run and take that parcel.”

“I shan’t have the doll’s clothes finished!”

“Leave the dress and get the nightgown finished; take it with the parcel, and run along with the rest to-morrow.”

The sun looked like a golden ball trying to penetrate through the fog as Lucy mounted

the area-steps with her parcels; and the buildings in the Crescent rose up shadow-like as she made her way to the house where the little girl lived.

“Oh! You’ve been so long,” said the child’s mother. “My little darling has been crying nearly all day. You promised it this morning, you know,” she added, reproachfully.

Lucy felt very much ashamed as she explained that the other clothes would be finished next day. It made the tears come to her eyes when the mother spoke of the child’s disappointment.

She looked very thoughtful when she sat once more in Miss Wain’s room and paid her rent. Miss Wain was having a cup of tea, so she poured out one for Lucy.

“Tell me about that Parable,” said Lucy, after relating about the child.

“You see,” began Miss Wain, as she stirred her second cup of tea, “it says in Scripture, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto ten virgins who took their lamps!’ Five were wise and took enough oil, and five were foolish and didn’t take enough.”

“Yes, I know,” interrupted Lucy impatiently, “but I can’t help thinking it was selfish of the five not to give the others some.”

“But there wouldn’t have been enough for *any one*, for there wouldn’t have been enough to go round! You foolish virgin! I must call you that, for it’s just what you are! Our Lord spoke in parables to make it easy for us all. Some He meant for men, and some for women. And this one seems specially for us. Don’t you see what He meant? You cannot give to another the Kingdom! One’s own faith, constancy and watchfulness are necessary if we are not to lose the Kingdom after all. Listen! Recognising God as Father is like the wick of your lamp; God the Son is like the oil; and the Holy Spirit is like the flame which comes when it is lighted. Now isn’t that beautiful?”

“That’s the Blessed Trinity!” exclaimed Lucy excitedly. “Fancy bringing the Blessed Trinity into everyday life! I don’t think I shall ever forget about oil again!”

And Miss Wain, noticing the sparkle in her eyes, knew that at last she understood. And it did really transform Lucy’s character, as future events proved.



# MOORTOR FOLK

Some  
Happenings  
in a quiet Village

by Amos E. Denner

## Mr. Groves' Bible

POSTMAN JAMES GRICE'S arrival at Beulah Cottage one November morning caused an unusual flutter of excitement which Donald and Lilian Whitlock tried hard to conceal from each other with laughable non-success.

Donald and Lilian had been married twelve months to the day, and were as happy as turtle doves in their nice little home.

After the never-to-be-forgotten affair of Donald's home-coming just in time to save his mother's home from being sold up, the one-time wanderer secured the position of manager at the Moortor Butter Factory, and by arrangement with old Mr. Groves, the proprietor, he was gradually paying into the concern an amount of money, which, when completed, would purchase a partnership in the business.

The old proprietor had taken a fancy to Donald from the very first. He had returned from his trip to the Continent about a week after the happy re-union of mother and son, and the whole affair had made a favourable impression upon him.

On the day previous to the wedding Mr. Groves called Donald into the office. The old gentleman, if somewhat eccentric, was a true man of God. . . . He was known to have a way of his own, but all the work-people declared that at heart he was as good as gold.

"You will have plenty of those wedding present things to go on with, Donald," he said

quaintly; "and that means I needn't be in too much hurry with mine. So I've decided to wait for a year. Business requires to be watched a bit. . . . Maybe in twelve months' time I shall be able to find something amongst my belongings for you. I've always said my old study was overcrowded. Now trot along, and don't get nervous to-morrow."

And now twelve months had passed. Donald and Lilian had kept careful note of the date, and well knowing old Mr. Groves' reliability concerning even half a promise, they both tried to appear calm and collected at the breakfast table.

The postman's smart rat-tat put a welcome end to their little game of make-believe, however, and each burst into a hearty laugh.

"How very conscientious my worthy brother-in-law is," exclaimed Lilian in an amused tone. "At any other time, when not on duty, he would have opened the door and bounced in. . . . He's a regular paragon of an official; but all the same, I suppose he'll stay out there rat-tatting until one of us answers." So saying she made her way to the front door.

"It's a registered parcel, Donald," she said excitedly. "And it's Mr. Groves' handwriting sure enough. . . . I wonder——"

"Here! You'll never untie those knots that way; give the parcel to me," interrupted Donald, feeling for his pocket-knife. "Too excited altogether, that's what you are," he commented jokingly.

Lilian couldn't help breaking into a rousing laugh.

"Of course, all the excitement is on my side, dear," she chuckled, amusedly watching her husband's efforts at cutting the string with the back of his knife.



"Mr. Groves evidently intended the parcel to reach us safely," said Donald, unwinding the third roll of corrugated cardboard. "He might just as easily have sent it by hand. It's only ten minutes' walk to the factory. . . . Funny old boss is mine. . . . Whatever in the world is this? . . . A second-hand family Bible!"

For a moment silence reigned, the silence of an astonishment which has a tinge of disappointment in it. Then Donald spoke.

"Well, upon my word! This is a bit too funny. I did think the old gentleman would have been good for a better wedding present than this." There was more than a hint of anger in Donald's voice. "To tell you the truth, Lilian," he went on, "I'm beginning to get a bit tired of Mr. Groves' 'funny ways.'" Here he threw the Book aside. "Eighteen pence or two shillings would buy an old copy like that, in any old book-shop."

And a few minutes later Donald set out for the butter factory feeling anything but pleasant.

\* \* \*

Things looked like going all wrong for Donald Whitlock that day. To begin with, for the first time in his short married life, he left Lilian that morning without the usual good-bye kiss, and was as miserable as possible because of this omission.

Then, when he arrived at the butter factory, he found a message awaiting him to say that old Mr. Groves had made up his mind to go to London for a few days, and requesting him to assume full responsibility in his absence.

"Another of the old gent's 'funny ways,'" reflected Donald caustically. "He must have known about this trip yesterday. Pity he couldn't think of mentioning it then."

After giving attention to the routine work Donald proceeded to open the morning's letters in order to deal with anything of importance that the mail might disclose.

And it was here that Donald seemed to come up against the matter that disturbed him most

"I did think the old gentleman would have been good for a better wedding present than this"



of all, for, on slitting open one of the envelopes, he went white with astonishment at the contents of the letter therein.

"References following," said the letter. "Thank you for the honour of appointment as manager. . . . Will certainly keep the secret as per your instructions. . . . You may rely on my co-operation. Will come next week as ordinary employee in order to acquaint myself with the working of the business before definitely being introduced as manager. This, as you suggest in your letter, will give you time to deal with the gentleman at present acting as your manager."

Donald Whitlock stared hard at nothing for a few moments, then he gave vent to a long-sustained "*P-h-e-w*."

## Moortor Folk

"More 'funniness,'" he exclaimed grimly, when something of the import of the letter pierced his understanding. "So *that's* Mr. Groves' little game, is it? And what about my humble self, I should like to know? . . . And what about the money I've been paying into this precious business? I suppose I shall get back that, if I'm shunted. The old gent ought to have been a bit sharper, though. He must have overlooked the fact that I should be opening the letters to-day. . . . Ah well! . . . I suppose, after all, a prodigal has to pay his price, even though he means to run well. Now I understand why Mr. Groves has kept his journey to London so secret. I can read him like a book. He has gone up to see his solicitors. . . . Will get them to draw up a deed or some such legal thing, dissolving my managership. . . . The old boss is so strictly business-like with money affairs. . . . Umph! Nice wedding anniversary this, I must admit. Makes me feel hard things against everybody. . . . I'll complete the opening of the mail, and then run down to 'Sunny View' for a few moments. Perhaps dear old mother will be able to advise as to my future movements. . . . But I did want to stay in Moortor."

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile Lilian Whitlock, somehow finding it hard to keep back some very insistent tears, more closely examined the Bible which had been the cause of such disappointment.

Donald, she reflected, had not even taken the trouble to open the flyleaf, so keen had been his sense of frustrated anticipations.

Now, as she turned the page, in more or less absent-minded fashion, she was suddenly recalled to her senses at sight of the inscription confronting her eyes. Once or twice she felt like giving a little scream as she read again and again the words of old Mr. Groves, written in his own peculiar shaky but decipherable hand.

"To my beloved partner, Donald Whitlock. A little memento. This dear old Book has shown me the way of life. It is given with the owner's best wishes, and with all prayerful confidence that it will prove a real guide in business, and a true light in the home."

"Partner!!" exclaimed Lilian joyfully. "Partner! . . . And to think poor old Donald went off in such a paddy this morning." Then she thought of the arrangement which Donald had made with Mr. Groves with regard to buying a partnership. . . . That would take at least another three years in the ordinary way, and

here was everything all settled. . . . And on their wedding day anniversary too. . . . Good old Mr. Groves!

And the tears which Lilian could no longer restrain were anything but tears of sorrow.

"I must hurry off to 'Sunny View,'" she said a little later. "Dear old Granny ought to be the first to hear of her son's good fortune. This ought to cheer her up. The dear old soul has not been at all well since that affair at Poacher Brown's."

\* \* \* \* \*

On her way to the cottage Lilian unexpectedly encountered Donald. His glum manner was in sharp contrast to the light-hearted greeting which his wife gave him.

"And where are you off to?" was his subdued query.

"Tell me first where you are going," said Lilian, with an attempt at seriousness.

"I'm just going along to see mother," was his answer. "There's a bit of news I've just heard that's upset me rather badly, and I was going to ask her to break it to you, as I haven't the heart to do it myself."

"Poor old dear," said Lilian, struggling hard to keep a straight face. Evidently Donald had not yet discovered the happy secret, she reflected.

And so it has to be recorded in these happenings in a quiet village, that a little later, when Donald Whitlock left his mother's cottage for the factory once more, instead of a scowl he wore a smile, and in his heart was a song of thanksgiving.

"It has been a bit difficult to keep the secret," said old Granny Whitlock to Lilian after Donald had gone. "But I knew all along that this was going to happen. . . . Mr. Groves has gone to London to-day to fix up everything with his solicitors. . . . He declared on your wedding day that Donald's action in saving my little home from being sold up was something that should not be forgotten, and now——"

"Of course, the old gentleman in his splendid gift is going to allow that money to stand that Donald has already paid into the business?" ventured Lilian.

Old Granny Whitlock's face lit up with pure delight.

"Oh, that is going to pay for 'Beulah Cottage,'" she said happily. "Mr. Groves is seeing to that as well. He doesn't do things by halves. Makes you feel like shouting 'glory,' doesn't it?"



# A Strange Dream

By Lieut.-Col. A. H. WILLIAMS

**J**IM LEEFE was a bad boy. There was no doubt about it. His mother prayed earnestly for him, his Sunday-school teacher prayed for him, but he loved evil rather than good, and, as he afterwards said, "I was determined to do what was wrong instead of what was right."

When Jim was nine years of age his mother died and his grandmother took care of him. She also prayed for him, but it seemed to be in vain. Circumstances made it necessary for him to go out to work early in life, and he was thrown amongst the roughest class of men. He quickly learned their evil ways, and it seemed as if all the prayer offered on his behalf had been wasted breath.

When Jim was sixteen years of age he dreamed a dream. He was on the village common. There it was, with the two rows of elm trees on either side as he had known it all his life. But there was something new and terrible there. It was the Judgment Day, and in the middle of the common was the bottomless pit—a huge yawning chasm.

Crowds of people were moving across the common, and he recognised among them many of his companions in sin. Some had gone down into the abyss, and he himself stood on its brink. He did not fall over, but he could not draw back. He shook with fear.

And then he awoke, wet with perspiration. He wanted to pray, but could not. He dared not go to sleep, or even close his eyes.

Three nights in succession he dreamed this dream, and awoke trembling with fear.

But in spite of these dreadful warnings Jim did not turn to God, and he

became hardened and yet more hardened. He took to drink and gambling, and even had murder in his heart. But his conscience was not dead, and the Spirit of God still strove with him. He realised that drink was dragging him down, and he resolved that he would take it no more.

Next night, the 6th of November, 1896, he walked up the village street and sat on a wall opposite the public-house. There was a great struggle within him. Should he go into the public-house or should he stay outside? He had no money in his pocket, but there were two sixpences on his watch-chain which he might offer to the publican for a drink.

He sat on the wall fingering the coins. The battle raged within. He knew the good, he wished to follow the good, but he was strangely attracted by the evil. He could not tear himself away from that spot.

The door opened as a man entered the public-house, and it closed behind him. Jim heard the sound of voices, and for a moment a bright light streamed across the road.

Knowing the good, and longing for the good, Jim Leefe chose the evil. He slipped off the wall, walked slowly across the road, and pushed the door, as he had often done before. It would not open! Muttering an oath he returned to his seat on the wall.

Again he fingered the sixpences, and again the inward struggle began. Two more men entered the public-house. The door seemed to open to them without any difficulty. Jim walked across the road, but again the door would not open! He returned to his seat on the wall.

## A Strange Dream



Again the door would not open!

He could not keep his fingers off those sixpences or his mind from the fascination which held it. Three men came out of the public-house. The door opened and shut as usual. Some of his mates came along and asked him to join them. He said he might do so later. They entered the public-house without difficulty.

A third time he crossed the road, a third time he pushed the door, and a third time it would not open! He turned away and went home, cursing the landlord, who had had all his money, and who, he supposed, was now holding the door against him.

Next day the landlord met him and said, "Where did you get to last night, Jim?"

"You would not let me in," replied Jim in a surly tone. "I tried three times to open the door and couldn't."

"I tell you the honest truth, Jim," said the landlord, "no one touched that door."

Jim's dream came back to him. He kept away from the drink, and the public-house saw him no more. But sobriety will not save a soul, and Jim was far from happy.

On the evening of Easter Day, the following year, he felt constrained to go to the little village chapel. Speaking of that day afterwards he said, "I could open the door of God's house easily enough, though God had

stopped me from walking into the devil's house." The preacher gave out his text, "*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*" It was not the first time that Jim had heard him preach, but that night the service gripped him as never before.

"SO GREAT SALVATION!" He looked back on years of sin—wilful sin. And then he saw that in spite of it all the Son of God had loved him, yes, loved *him*, and given Himself for *him*. Jesus had suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring him to God.

Knowing this, Jim had continued in sin, neglecting the great salvation. Then God had spoken to him through a thrice repeated dream. Still he had neglected the great salvation. Again God had spoken through a thrice barred door. And still he had neglected the



## A Strange Dream

great salvation. How should he escape if he any longer neglected so great a salvation?

At the close of the service Jim Leefe went into the vestry and there yielded his life to God.

Nineteen years later, before going across to France, Jim Leefe rose in a soldiers' meeting, and testified before

his comrades to the keeping power of God, the God to Whom he had come in all his sin and wretchedness that Easter evening.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye."

## The Control of Thoughts

A FEW days ago I talked with a hard-pressed woman who was aggravating her troubles by brooding upon them. She goes about her daily routine, and in her mind is continually resenting her lot in life. She comes in from some bit of pleasure, and at once starts again upon the same old round of thoughts. Her burden is heavy indeed, but the habit of brooding tends to lower her health of body as well as of mind.

It is of the greatest importance to learn to substitute good thoughts for bad. We make our burden harder to carry by always resenting that burden and keeping it always in the forefront of the mind.

"But," people say, "it is impossible to control my thoughts, they come in spite of me!"

I know a man who is annoyed by certain kinds of trashy music; if his ears hear it, it will fasten itself upon his memory and keep up a plaguing sing-song there notwithstanding his dislike. Therefore, when the obnoxious sounds come up from some other part of the house, he shuts the door of his ears by whistling or humming some beloved and beautiful bit of great music.

It is possible to treat harmful thoughts in a similar way. Sing to yourself

some dear old song or a noble hymn, and the mere sound in your ears, whether tuneful or not, will help to shut out unwholesome ideas. Send your thoughts up to God in prayer. Keep the mind filled with the sense of His enfolding presence and His everlasting love.

The mind can be trained to habits, either bad or good, as well as the body. Permit it to live with its dislikes, its annoyances, and the diseases that afflict the body, and before long you will be the slave and victim of a mind so trained.

Dwell instead upon the good things that come to you, the brave things people do, the thoughts you have found in great books, and greatest of all, the thought of God as One who can be trusted. In the words of the apostle Paul, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Don't dwell on grievances. When hard circumstances cannot be changed, there is both joy and victory in the cultivation of a spirit which triumphs over them.



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"He bent over the prostrate form and recognised his neighbour"

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# CUSHING'S FAGGOTS



THEY were cutting the roads where four met. There had been a motor accident and public attention had been called to this danger spot. The corners were all being removed and this involved the cutting down of some trees.

John Dyball was not one of the workmen employed for this, but he passed the place every day and noted the wood that lay about.

John was very poor. None of his children were yet able to earn and his hard-working wife was not strong. And it was winter time.

One day when he walked shivering on his way back to the poor midday meal which awaited him, he saw outside a neighbouring cottage a horse and cart, the horse contentedly munching from its nosebag while a man carried heaps of faggots to a convenient place. Through the open door of Mr. Cushing's cottage he saw his old mother warming her hands at the fire. Cushing could afford to buy wood. He had no wife and no family. Two of Dyball's children, Tim and Alice, stood watching, and a pang of envy shot through him.

He had not dared to touch the wood, which belonged to the authorities, but it flashed into his mind that either at night or in the absence of Cushing he could get hold of some of this.

Poor Dyball had always lived from hand to mouth and never learnt to put by for a wintry time. This was partly due to his having so little, but not entirely. There was a certain want of "grip" in his character. He had not laid hold of Jesus Christ, and so there was something lacking in his whole outlook on life.

It is a curious thing that many people think belief is a matter of "go as you please" and do not realise that it changes everything.

"Here, Tim," he called to his little boy.

"Yes, dad."

"Just you watch where they puts them faggots, lad. I've a reason for wanting to know."

He did not think Cushing would store them in his shed yet awhile, and if he did, well, he would find a way.

Indoors, Mrs. Dyball had laid a meal of sorts; cheese, a morsel of pork fat, bread, apple pie and—the only hot thing—tea. A small fire, chiefly of cinders, was the sole source of warmth, and beside this in a broken wicker chair sat Mrs. Dyball, wrapped in a shabby old shawl. John thought of the leaping flames that warmed old Mrs. Cushing and a sudden anger woke in his heart.

"They've been and put the wood near by the shed, but not inside," called out little Tim, presently running in. "My, but I'm hungry."

"And oh," said Alice, holding out her red hands to the poor fire, "ain't it cold just!"

That night was foggy and freezing. When the others were all in bed, however, Dyball threw his ragged coat over him and crept outside. He had had a look round and seen, as Tim had said, that the wood was near the shed. No doubt to-morrow Cushing would store it away, for it was a Saturday, when there would be only a half-day's work. All the more reason for making sure of some to-night. So, fumbling and groping, he made his way along, and from one bundle and another pulled out sticks. His eyes smarted, and his hands were very cold, almost numb. Still he managed, and presently he had a good armful and started to carry his treasure to the house. But there was one thing he had not reckoned with. He had tried to be quiet and careful and knew more or less where the bundles were, but he did not realise that old Mrs. Cushing's cat had been put outside for the night. He fell over the poor black puss

## Cushing's Faggots

and lay prostrate, one leg doubled under him and the wood flung hither and thither.

A little while ago he had wished above everything that no one should know his whereabouts, but now there was nothing he so much longed for as that a door should open and help should be forthcoming. He was in terrible pain, and nearly fainting, and for all he knew he would have to lie there for hours. His wife had gone to bed and to sleep, and of course the children would not know he was out.

He tried to call out, but could only groan, and as he was some little distance from the cottage, and perhaps the fog muffled sound, no one heard him.

Now old Mrs. Cushing suffered from asthma; the prevailing weather was bad for her, and she woke up gasping for breath. She struck a light and put a little of the powder which she inhaled for relief into the saucer which was on a table by her bedside. After she had burned it for a minute or two her son, who was in the next room, smelt it.

He roused himself, put on a thick coat and came to her. He was very sorry for her, but not alarmed, for painful as asthma is to witness, those who are accustomed to it know that the attack may pass and leave the patient not necessarily much the worse. He comforted her as well as he could, wrapped her shawl round her shoulders, and went downstairs to replenish the fire. It had got very low and was almost out.

"I'll get one of those faggots," he said to himself, and put on his boots, which were in the kitchen drying, and, taking a lantern, went across the yard. Thus it came about that he stumbled against poor Dyball as the latter had done against the cat, though the puss had fortunately long since got away. Cushing had the advantage of light, but the mist confused things. He bent over the prostrate and now unconscious form and recognised his neighbour. He also saw what he had been doing.

For a moment fierce anger surged up into his heart, but Cushing possessed what Dyball lacked. His good old mother had taught him early to love and serve God and he had never departed from it. This was probably why his life had been blessed, for surely the promises remain as of old. So now in place of anger he felt pity and set to work to help his neighbour.

Rapidly gathering up some sticks, he repaired to the kitchen, made up the fire and went upstairs to dress properly.

"I am going after Dr. Barton, mother," he

said. "And don't put the candle near your bed."

As it chanced Mrs. Cushing was feeling rather bad and the doctor would bring medicine to relieve her breathing, so she nodded assent. But it was really on Dyball's account he went and also to get help to carry him indoors.

In a few hours John Dyball was in the local hospital. His leg was badly broken, the exposure in his low state of health had done him harm, and when he lay in bed worry and anxiety did their work to reduce him still further. He was troubled lest it should become known that he was taking his neighbour's goods, troubled about his wife and children, troubled lest he should lose his job at the farm.

And suffering in mind and body, he was only too thankful to unburden himself to the chaplain when the time came for his visit to the bedside.

"Cushing has always been kind to my youngsters and so has the old woman," said Dyball. "But I felt out of sorts at his having so much and me so little."

"I should say," said the chaplain, "that you could have more too if you set to work the right way."

"How's that, sir?" asked Dyball eagerly.

"By seeking first to please God. It is more and more remarkable to me as I go about and hear the tales of people's lives, that even so-called Christians act as if His marvellous promises are empty words. We are told that if we work for Him He will supply all our needs, we are told that He knows what we have need of, we are told that though the sparrows were of so little value that even for a farthing *two* could be bought, yet not one of them (though worth only half a farthing!) fell to the ground without God knowing. Why did Jesus take the trouble to teach this care?"

"I don't know much about the Bible, sir."

"No? Well, now's your chance. Faggots, my man, are used not only for fuel, but for raising batteries and other purposes in fortification. Let the texts you learn on the love and care of God serve you as a weapon against the enemy who tempts you to forget this. You will have a fine bundle before you leave here."

He left Dyball with much to think of, and one of the first things done by the invalid was to have a letter sent to Cushing asking him to come and see him on visiting day. The neighbour came, bringing little Tim, and Dyball found Cushing doing all he could for his family.



## Cushing's Faggots

"I've a deal to thank you for," said Dyball, "and I hope you've forgiven me about them faggots. I want you to ask the parson to see my wife and get them youngsters to Sunday school. They must learn what's right."

"I'll see to it. And I'll do what I can for them and you too. I've had a chance to put by against hard times, and I think if you go straight you'll find you can too. It's my opinion, mate, that the man who lays hold on the truth isn't the fool some would make

out, but wiser in managing his affairs than others. I speak as I find, anyhow."

And then Dyball summoned courage to tell him of the chaplain's words, how the twigs which the texts represented gathered together made a great faggot for warmth or kindling of the spirit and for holding off the enemy.

"My old mother knows more about the Bible than I do," said Cushing humbly; "but from what I know of her I think the chaplain's told you right."

I. J. H.

# THE CHRISTMAS HAMPER

By Eleanor Clare



GRANDMA sat in the rocking chair by the fire with Robbie on her knee. Her silvery hair was very close to the golden head resting against her grey woollen shawl.

"Sing 'Ninety and nine,' Gam-ma."

So Grandma, ever obedient to her darling, began:

"There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
In the shelter of the fold,  
But one was out on the hills away  
Far off from the gates of gold."

And when she sang "One was out on the hills away," one little hand clasped something tightly—something very precious. And Grandma thought of some one very precious—some one who was far away, and who had the same grey eyes as her darling; one to whom she had sung this same song thirty years ago.

She had come to the end of the second verse:

"Although the road be rough and steep  
I go to the desert to find My sheep."

"Dat'll do! I'll go to sleep now, Gam-ma." Robbie said that every night, and Susie

always laughed to see her mother's mouth turn down at the corners—laughed until her mother laughed also. But to-night when she entered her thoughts were on the letter she held out to her mother.

"The postman's just put it in the box as I came downstairs. I'll take Robbie to bed. Whatever's he got in his hand?" She peered between the chubby fingers. "It's that wooden sheep out of his Noah's ark that's only got three legs! Bless him! I'll buy him a new one this Christmas. Wouldn't his mother have been proud of him? The bonny boy!" she sighed as she carried him upstairs.

Mrs. Medway put on her spectacles, opened the envelope and read the letter; and when Susie came back the look of disappointment on her mother's face told her the news.

"Then Bob isn't coming? It's a shame, mother! Ever since Harriet died he's been mixed up with a bad lot that don't do him any good. Of course, losing Harriet when Robbie was born was a shock, but I never thought he'd take it that way. But you never know what Bob's going to do."

Susie chattered on while her mother gazed sadly into the fire.

"Are you answering the letter already, mother?" she asked in surprise ten minutes later, as her mother took a box of stationery from a drawer.

"I must tell him to expect the hamper," she replied earnestly, suppressing a sigh.

"He doesn't deserve a hamper!"

## The Christmas Hamper

"It's the only thing that'll make him feel he's got a home to come to."

"He knows he's got a home!" Susie replied irritably. "I suppose you'll be setting a place at the table for him like you did last year? He, being the eldest, ought to set the others a good example. But it's the other way about; Fred and Charlie wouldn't stay away on any account, and they're coming from town too!" As her mother made no reply, she went on: "I'll go and buy some Christmas presents. I've saved up quite a lot of money. Wouldn't I be rich if I had all the money I turn over in the shop—selling tea, alone! You'd be surprised——"

"Go away, chatterbox! I'll never get the letter done!"

The smile that accompanied the words took away their sternness, so Susie departed with a ripple of laughter.

Clara, the younger one, who served in a draper's shop, came in an hour later. She had the same rosy cheeks and dark eyes as her sister.

"Post my letter, Clara, on your way back to business," said her mother. "Robert isn't coming."

"What a shame!" exclaimed Clara, glancing at the letter. "Can I fill in the last page, mother?"

Receiving her mother's consent she put the letter in her pocket, for there was still an hour before the last post.

It was two days before Christmas Day. Grandma prepared the hamper while Robbie played near the sofa. Grandma smiled as he murmured comforting words to the three-legged sheep which had to lean against the side of the Noah's ark.

Susie had been displaying her gifts before going to business, and had left them on the table. A brooch for Clara had been put into a smaller box, and, as it required less wadding, she had torn some off, and it had fallen to the floor.

Robbie picked it up and wrapped it tenderly round the sheep which was "sick and helpless and ready to die," as Grandma sang in the song. Then it had to be out in the desert, so he put it at the other end of the sofa.

Grandma filled the corners in the hamper with soft bits of paper or anything she could find, so that the Christmas pudding and mincepies would keep steady. When Clara came home at six o'clock she suddenly remembered the letter. Robbie was on Susie's knee crying

bitterly because he had lost his sheep. Grandma was worn out trying to comfort him. Clara gazed wistfully at her for a moment, then she finished the letter.

"I want my sheep," Robbie whimpered, "wiv a bwoken leg."

Grandma took him on her knee again, while Susie hunted in vain for the sheep. Grandma began to sing mournfully:

"No, no! Don't want 'Ninety and nine!' Wobbie wants one dat's 'Far fom der gates of go—old!'" he sobbed.

"I'll go and buy him another Noah's ark," said Susie.

"No, no!" he sobbed. "Don't want one." But after a while he fell asleep, exhausted.

Grandma thought of the parable of the Lost Sheep. Didn't the Lord Himself say that a man would search for his sheep till he found it? And wasn't her grandson just a little man? And didn't her heart yearn to bring her own stray sheep back into the fold?

Meanwhile, Bob Medway sat in his lonely lodgings thinking of the folk at home; sorry now that he had written he was spending Christmas in town. Clara's postscript troubled him. He took the crumpled letter from his pocket and read once more: "I don't know what sort of Christmas we are going to have. Robbie is whining all the time for a three-legged sheep he has lost. He is always such a good boy, but he will be very miserable until it is found; and mother is fretting over her two-legged sheep that is so far away from the fold."

"That's me!" he muttered.

He turned to the first part. Not a word of complaint! Only to tell him to expect a hamper. "I expect you are too busy at the warehouse. A carman has a lot to do at Christmas. Ever your loving mother."

The hamper arrived the morning of Christmas Eve. It gave him a horrible feeling of homesickness. After taking out a few mincepies a flat piece of wadding with something hard inside it claimed his attention. It was wedged between the pudding and the cake. With some curiosity, and thinking it was some trick of Susie's, he unwrapped it. And there was the three-legged sheep!

He guessed at once how it came to be there. Putting it carefully in his pocket he glanced hastily at the contents in the hamper and put it in the cupboard. To return the broken sheep offered an excuse to go home. It would make his son happy. But that was only an



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excuse. He wanted to go. His heart glowed at the thought of seeing his son, but, at the same time, he was overwhelmed with remorse that he had so neglected him.

He arranged with his mate to have the evening off, promising him New Year's Eve in exchange; and, at five o'clock, he walked out of the little railway station at his own home, his pockets bulging with presents.

It was nice to see clean snow after the slush in town. The wind blowing cold and shrill brought to memory an old song: "There were ninety and nine that safely lay." His mother had rocked him to sleep with that song.

At last he reached the house and opened the gate. There was a fire in the parlour. He could see Clara lighting the candles on the Christmas tree. Then the shadow on the window made her turn. She rushed to the door.

"Well—I—never!" she exclaimed breathlessly.

He dashed past her with an awkward laugh, dashed along the passage into the kitchen. His mother, with a hysterical laugh, was in his arms.

Robbie gazed wide-eyed at the big man; and when that same big man put his hand in his pocket and brought out his lost sheep the little

face instantly became radiant—as radiant as Grandma's! And when the others came in there were general greetings of joy.

Of course they all guessed immediately how it had happened. Bob Medway could not take his eyes away from his child. But Robbie was tired. A stab of pain and remorse again shot through him when his child turned to Grandma and said:

"I want to go to bed wiv my poor sick sheep the big man's brought back."

"That's daddie, darling!" whispered Susie, feeling sorry for her brother. "Kiss him good night!"

And as Bob Medway felt the little lips on his he vowed he would be a different man—with God's help.

"Must Grandma sing 'Ninety and nine'?"

But the child shook his head and hugged his sheep very close. So she took him upstairs, tucked him in bed, and he closed his eyes, but never relaxing for a moment his hold on the sheep.

The table was laid in the parlour for late tea, and they were all assembled, except Bob, who waited at the foot of the stairs for his mother.

"Bob never has much to say," said Susie



He could see Clara lighting the candles on the Christmas-tree



## The Christmas Hamper

in a whisper to the others, "but his actions speak louder than words, as the saying is."

His face looked strong and determined, and his eyes were shining as he met his mother's gaze. He placed his arm around her and they entered the room. He seated her comfortably at the head of the table, amidst a profound silence, and he went himself to the foot. On a round table in the window was the Bible. He turned over the pages while the rest of the family waited and marvelled. Then with one accord they bowed their heads as he began the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, the fourth verse :

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours,

saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."

He closed the Book reverently, and put it back, looked at his mother, then at the rest. His mother was weeping quietly—tears of joy—and the expression of remorse in his grey eyes almost broke Susie down. With an effort he put all sadness from him, and motioned Susie to play "The ninety and nine" on the piano. Presently his deep earnest voice rang out above the rest at the last verse :

"There arose a cry to the gate of heaven,  
Rejoice, I have found My sheep!  
And the Angels echoed around the throne,  
Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own."

Susan often said afterwards, "You never know what Bob's going to do, but what he does he does with his whole heart. The Parable of the Lost Sheep had become a real thing to him."

## "Stop the Waste"

"I TELL you what it is, Joe, waste is at the bottom of most of our troubles to-day, especially waste of money and time. This ground we're working on has been just waste, but now it's going to be turned to use, and we'll make a good job of it if we keep on at this rate. Talk about waste, just look at the money spent in Grendale to keep up the Red Lion and the Green Dragon and all the other coloured beasts that swallow women's comfort and children's happiness."

"Oh, come now, Alf, there's no harm in a glass of beer, and a man must have a bit of fun and friendship after a hard day's work. 'Tisn't every fellow that's got a home and wife like yours."

"No, I only wish they had. But there's no reason why your home shouldn't be as comfortable. Our money's the same. Cut out the waste, lad, and give Nellie and the kiddies a chance."

"I don't know. She wastes *her* time gadding about and never has anything ready."

"Perhaps she's lost heart," said Alf Smith gravely. "Women have a hard time to make ends meet these days, and the children need a lot. There's no margin for the wild beasts, Joe."

"I wish your missus would look in sometimes and hearten her up a bit," said Joe uneasily. "She's not a bit like she used to be."

"I'll tell her," said Alf; "but it's up to you, Joe, to do the heartening. Husband's job that. Go home cheerful and lend a hand and stop there to-night. Try it!"

Joe Astley did not promise, but he was very quiet and thoughtful all the morning. At one he went home to dinner. The kitchen was in the usual muddle, and his wife, in a torn apron and tumbled hair, was rushing about trying to put two hours' work into a few minutes. The children were home from school and clamouring for dinner. They sat down presently to a piece of tough and blackened steak and sodden potatoes.

"It's all very well for Alf," thought Joe angrily, but he kept hasty words back and tried to eat the untempting meal.

Nellie looked unhappy and ashamed for once, especially when Joe said kindly :

"I'll bring in something extra for tea, so look out, kiddies!"

"Whatever's come over Joe?" she said to herself when left alone again. "I must have a clear up this afternoon, but I'll just run in next door first," and leaving the untidy room she went to another that was, if possible, still more desolate.

When a gentle knock sounded an hour later she hurried out to see Mrs. Smith standing at her door, with a bright smile on her comely face.

Nellie knew her well by sight, though she lived two streets away, but the neighbours called



## "Stop the Waste"

her proud and standoffish. And this was her first visit. Nellie hesitated about asking her in, but the visitor had no intention of going away without a talk.

"Our husbands work together," she said pleasantly, "and I heard you had not been very well lately, so I thought I might be able to help a bit if you would let me. I want us to be friends."

Nellie hardly knew how it happened, but in five minutes the visitor's coat was off and the table was cleared. Then the fire was coaxed to burn brightly and the hearth swept, and very soon the dishes were back on the dresser in neat order.

"Now let me damp and roll the clothes for you while you put your feet up and rest. You look tired."

The roughly dried clothes were gathered up from chairs and sofas and were soon neatly disposed of in the basket, ready for ironing.

Nellie lay back and watched her brisk and capable helper as if fascinated.

"You work so fast," she said presently. "I wish I could."

"I always try to get work out of the way and waste no time over it," said Mrs. Smith cheerily. "Then I can afford to rest. And I *do* rest a little every day when I have finished. So must you, now, and then you will have time to dress before tea-time. I'll come again soon."

When Joe came home there was tea laid on a clean cloth and actually a bunch of flowers on the table, while Nellie wore a white blouse and her hair was done in the way he liked.

He brought a small plum cake and a bag of pears, and little Jack and Eleanor shouted with delight.

After tea came a romp till their bedtime, and, most surprising of all, father showed no signs of going out again.

"This is like old times, Nellie," he said,



"We'll make a good job of it if we keep on at this rate"

## "Stop the Waste"

stretching himself comfortably in the old easy chair. "What's come to you, lassie, all so spick and span and welcoming?"

"I might say the same; what's come to you, Joe?" she laughed shyly, "so kind and gentle and stopping in like this."

"Well, Alf's been on to me about waste," he said quietly, "and I've done a tidy bit of thinking since morning. He says stop the waste of the drink money and the time spent with that lot; and, if you'll help me, old girl, I've about made up my mind to turn over a new leaf."

"It's queer you should say that about Alf," Nellie answered. "His wife has been here this afternoon, and what she said and what she did has made me do some thinking too."

There's been lots of waste on my side, and I'm sorry. If you're going to be different, Joe, so will I."

"Alf wants us all to go there to tea on Sunday, and I expect that means church after. We used to go together, and it's there we shall get strength, Nellie, for the battle in front of us."

There is no doubt it was a battle for both, but in the strength that is never denied they conquered and the waste was stopped.

Later on they were able to move to a house next door to the Smiths, and to-day it would be hard to say which home is the brightest and happiest. For the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich.

MARY ROWLES JARVIS

## The One-Room Woman

IN these days of difficulty, when the housing question especially is so acute, I need offer no apology, perhaps, for giving a few results of my experience as "a woman of one room."

A little while ago I had two rooms, but the house was sold, and I had to turn out. Fortunately for me, a friend consented to take me in, and though she had but one room to let to me, I snapped at it greedily. Nevertheless, I spent more than one sleepless night wondering how the contents of two rooms could be got into one, and that one measuring only 15 ft. by 13 ft., with no vestige of recess or cupboard.

First, I made a plan and measurements of my new room, with careful notes as to space beside window, and fireplace, and door, then I searched the furniture shops for a piece of furniture which would serve several purposes at once, and unearthed an old kitchen dresser—the very thing.

There were seven drawers, and a small centre cupboard; the whole measured 5 ft. in length, 2 ft. in width, and 2 ft. 6 in. in height. The shelves, which, by the way, were disdaining all connection with it, were 5 ft. long, 3 ft. 6 in. high, solid-backed and topped, and three in number. As I faced these two solid objects I knew I had found that which solved the difficulty of my one room. So, by arrangement of part exchange with the kind proprietor of the shop, I secured my dresser entire. It was sent up to my new room, and permission was accorded me to paint it, and fix the shelves, before taking up my residence; with the pleasant result that it was ready for use when I did come.

Directly the linoleum was laid (I will not advise you to have a carpet) I had the dresser placed with one end close to the wall, so that it stands out in the room, facing the door. It stands 5 ft.

away from the door—is 2 ft. wide, you remember, and so leaves a space behind it 6 ft. long, 5 ft. wide. This space is my "kitchen," where wash-stand, towel-horse, dress-basket, boots, saucepans, and oil-stoves are kept without any inconvenience whatever.

At the back of the dresser (sideboard one might call it now) I fixed some rickety bookshelves, to hold all kitchen odds and ends in a compact way. Then, on a long bamboo, I hung casement curtains from the sideboard to the wall, thus enclosing the kitchen entirely.

There is plenty of space in the other part of the room, and no suggestion whatever of a bed-sitting-room, because the bed itself is covered with green (no white counterpane), and with cushions arranged along the wall side during the day, has the appearance of a couch. It is an ordinary 6 ft. by 3 ft. iron spring bed, no foot-rails except what one can cover, and at the head a small curtain hides the ironwork.

On entering the room you are confronted by 20 ft. of books (I love books). The sideboard shelves, three in number, are full, and a row on the sideboard itself. "What! is this a library?" exclaim my friends. I assure them that it is: a free library.

But that sideboard holds nearly all my books, my desk, workbox, and odds and ends on the top. In the drawers there are stationery, linen, and I do not know what. The centre cupboard is full of paper, books, and pamphlets, and jumbles. The wardrobe is a threefold screen, bracketed to the floor, in a corner, and it goes excellently with the coloured walls.

So my room contains sideboard, harmonium, bed, cabinet (made of orange-box, with margarine boxes for drawers), settee, bamboo cupboard for



## The One-Room Woman

groceries, etc., walnut bookcase with glass doors, for cups and saucers, and such-like gear; pretty wallpaper inside glass, as my china is not what a connoisseur would crave. I do not make a show of it; I use it. A table, three chairs, one of them a comfortable wicker one—the other two for “business purposes.” Typewriter, fender, fire-irons—pictures galore.

In the “kitchen,” washstand and shelves, and small home-made cupboard, on which I keep two oil-stoves, and oddments inside. The kitchen walls are covered with thin oilcloth, to keep them clean.

I hope these few remarks may be of service to some one, and that she may find, as I find, “There’s no place like Home.”

E. E. E.

## How to Keep Christmas

**T**HERE is a better thing than the observance of Christmas Day, and that is, keeping Christmas.

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people, and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you, and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background, and your duties, and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give life; to cease your complaints against the management of the universe, and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to stoop down and consider the needs and desires of little children;

to remember the weakness and loneliness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you, and ask yourself whether you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to try to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without waiting for them to tell you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts, and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you can keep it for a day, why not always? But you can never keep it alone.

HENRY VAN DYKE

## The Birthday

**A**LTHOUGH there was no falling snow  
’Twas Christmas Eve, long, long ago;  
And Mary rode with joyous face,  
The chosen vessel of her race.

Joseph, with calm and lofty mien,  
And thinking of his wondrous dream,  
Walked silently and full of fear;  
Was not the “Hope of Israel” near?

Reached was their haven, but the door  
Had fast closed very long before.  
The inn too full, no room was there,  
Naught left except the stable bare.

Hither they come; the ox and ass  
Gaze gently on them as they pass.  
Holy the night, so soft their tread,  
Leaving alone the manger bed.

No longer moves the Bethlehem Star,  
And weary shepherds from afar  
Rejoice, their wanderings are done,  
And God has sent His promised Son.

They enter in, with bowed head,  
And kneel beside the manger bed;  
With hearts uplifted, there they pray  
To Him who came on Christmas Day.

FANNY ALLEN

# Moortor Folk

## *Some Happenings in a Quiet Village*

By AMOS E. DENNER

### How Granny Whitlock went home

**Y**EARS after the event, Moortor people still spoke of old Granny Whitlock's Christmas party as the happiest affair within recollection.

Tea had been prepared in the kitchen, which at a push was just large enough to hold twenty odd people of all ages who had gathered there.

Of course, Donald and Lilian were present, Lilian acting as assistant hostess for the occasion. Then Thomas Metcalf and his partner put in an early appearance. The carrier seemed to have become a changed man in every respect, since his "great emancipation," as he termed it. As for old Peter Johnson, he seemed to have taken on a new lease of life at the party, and trotted out some wonderful old jokes that fairly amazed the company. They had no idea that Peter had it in him to be so gay.

Then, of course, Postman James Grice and his wife came. And if at ordinary times the man of letters was a "proper tease," then on this occasion he proved to be a "regular tartar," so declared old Granny Whitlock. He had received strict instructions from his wife to behave himself like a gentleman. How well he obeyed might be gathered from the fact that he somehow persuaded old Granny Whitlock to give him a sprig of mistletoe from the great bunch hanging in the centre of the sitting-room. The rest of the postman's pranks might easily be guessed.

No one felt it a bit strange that the local minister had been asked to look in for an hour, neither did it seem out of place that Poacher Brown and his wife appeared to be quite at home, as they sat quietly sharing in and enjoying the simple pleasantries of the occasion.

Ned Payne's children, resplendent in new frocks from Granny Whitlock's busy needle, and shiny faces and well-scoured hands, had the time of their lives, and long before the evening was out the cobbler declared to his wife that this sort of thing "beat any Hyde Park meetin' to a frazzle."

After a sumptuous tea, and whilst James Grice was declaring to all and sundry that he was "fed up" (though he didn't mean to give offence by saying so), a knock was heard on the

kitchen door, and suddenly there stalked into the room none other than Santa Claus! He had come to preside over the Christmas-tree arrangements, and if the children had the slightest suspicion that the visitor's voice put them in mind of Mr. Groves of the butter factory, they were much too delightedly excited with their handsome gifts to mention it.

And when the happy evening drew to a close—all too soon for everybody—the general verdict was that Granny Whitlock's party had proved to be a huge success.

"Three cheers for our dear old friend, and may she never know an aching bone!" shouted James Grice gaily and recklessly.

And the response was enough to startle every sleeper in Moortor village that night. But because two men were kept from the "Heather Bell" the old lady declared herself more than pleased.

\* \* \* \*

The end of the year drew near, and for some days it had been painfully obvious that dear old Granny Whitlock was nearing that bourne "whence no traveller ever returns."

Yet if the weight of seventy-four years sat heavily upon the outer body, in heart she was as young and hopeful as ever.

After Christmas she tried to follow—alas with growing difficulty—the old method of life. But the time came often, when some friend would have to accompany the old lady to her home after her visits to the sick and troubled, so frail had she become. At last her daughter-in-law had to take things in hand at "Sunny View," and Granny Whitlock yielded to the inevitable without a word of murmuring.

"I knew that this would have to come, some time, Lilian, dearie," she said bravely. "No machinery can go on always. But I am not fretful or anxious. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.' It is all because of the Divine mercy that I feel myself in spirit a strong woman, even now. . . . God has been wonderfully gracious. . . . Like another, I can say mine has been good measure, pressed down—running over. . . . Surely goodness and mercy have followed me. And now, in the sweet province of God, He has



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sent you to me to be His angel of consolation."

One December morning, when the mists hung low over the moor, Granny Whitlock seemed somewhat different from her usual self, and Lilian inquired if she should send for the doctor.

"No, dearie," came the quiet answer. "He's a good and useful man, but he cannot rebuild an old body. I shall just wait for the door of heaven to be opened, and go right in, without any pain. . . . No. . . . But I would like you to sit down and listen to me, while I know what I am saying. . . . And I'm sure you're going to be brave and strong. . . . You won't make it harder for me, will you, Lilian?"

"No, Granny," came Lilian's reply. But it meant a great effort.

"I am glad Donald is not here just now," went on the old lady. "He's turning out a good man, and I never cease to thank God for sending my wandering son home again. . . . And to think that Joseph Snell—the man who was the cause of my widowhood—should have been the dear Lord's instrument in leading Donald to the Saviour, whilst in Canada. . . .

It's more than wonderful how God evens things up. . . . And New Year's day will soon be here again. . . .

Fifty years since I parted with my dear husband, and something tells me—

But that is not what I was saying.

. . . . It's a good thing that Donald is not here now. Women folk can best talk of some things between themselves. . . .

A man is only in the way sometimes.

Two "In that drawer is my engagement ring. I took it off my finger when Matthew went home"

or three little matters are on my mind, Lilian. . . . I want you to listen to an old woman's whims as patiently as you can."

And the younger woman tried to be comforting and encouraging.

"First, and most important," said Granny Whitlock, "there's my dear old Bible. . . . There are some stains upon its yellow pages—the marks of a widow's tears—not always of sorrow, though. . . . Give the Book to Ned Payne, the shoemaker. . . . I've claimed the man for God, and something inside me seems to tell me that Ned Payne will find the entrance of God's word will give him light. . . . I'm going to meet the man in heaven. . . . As for Poacher Brown. . . . Well, he's become much steadier since Job Strong pulled him away from the ruins of his falling house. But the poacher and his wife have no proper home now. . . . They are to have my cottage when I'm gone. Maybe I shall see Samuel Brown in the heavenly mansions too.

"In the drawer, Lilian, is my engagement ring. I took it off my finger when dear Matthew went home, fifty years ago. . . . Wear it for



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my sake. . . . You will find it in the box where I have kept my wedding veil. . . . I want you to put the veil in my coffin. . . ."

Here Granny Whitlock gave a suggestive little laugh.

"Sounds funny, dearie, doesn't it? But I'm not thinking that this will give me the passport to heaven. It isn't that. In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage. You must forgive an old woman's whim, however. I know there is some one in the glory who has been waiting a long time for me. He was my own dear lover. Put that veil in my coffin. I shan't be a widow in heaven. . . ."

Tears were streaming from Lilian's eyes now, and she found it difficult to speak.

Outside the sun struggled to brighten the dull December day, but it seemed that within the humble cottage the place was lit by the strange radiance of another world.

Granny sat silent for a few moments, then, seemingly collecting her thoughts, she continued:

"'Tis about New Year's day that I want to speak last of all. I haven't been able to attend a place of worship lately, and I've been thinking a lot about this whilst lying awake. . . . It seems that God would have me arrange for a little service on New Year's day in this house. . . . Maybe God has a special purpose in this. And if you will see the minister, and ask him to have the few hymns I have put down, you will earn an old woman's gratitude.

"The hymns are just the old-fashioned sort. 'Oh happy day that fixed my choice,' was my husband's favourite. Then the hymn of my own conversion was 'Rock of Ages.' I hope that will be sung. Then I would like, 'There is a fountain filled with blood,' especially for the benefit of those in my mind who are coming—Ned Payne, Samuel Brown, and others. They'll come, if you tell them that I want them to be here. God will incline their hearts. . . . And to conclude, I should like all to sing, 'Shall we gather at the River?' I am afraid you will laugh at me, Lilian, but if you only knew. . . ."

\* \* \* \*

In concluding, for the present, the story of these happenings in a quiet village, it is a joy to tell of how a great spiritual blessing came to Moortor. . . . It began on that New Year's day when Granny Whitlock arranged the little service in her house.

Several men of the place, who scarcely ever thought seriously about eternal things, including the poacher, and the shoemaker, came to it.

These two men at first stoutly refused to come, but when they heard how frail and weak their old friend had become that settled it. And with their coming they influenced others to do the same.

The service was remarkable for its quiet searching influence. Undoubtedly the Spirit of God hovered about "Sunny View" that day; and as the minister spoke faithfully of every man's need of a Saviour many hearts were deeply moved.

And as the wind bloweth where it listeth, so in that beautiful little gathering on New Year's day several souls were born of God.

The greatest triumph of sovereign grace occurred during the singing of the last hymn, for then it was that both the shoemaker and poacher registered a resolve that they would meet dear old Granny Whitlock at "the river that flows by the throne of God."

Surely the angels rejoiced at these happenings in Moortor.

After the closing hymn the minister said, "Let us pray." Very tenderly the man of God commended all present to the love of a heavenly Father, asking that those who had made the great eternal decision might be kept true, and, in conclusion, made special reference to the dear old saint who had been led to arrange for the memorable service that day. . . . "We thank Thee for the holy influence which she has radiated throughout this village, for the countless acts of love associated with her name, and for those who have found it easier to be good when in her company," prayed the minister; and even though women wept, and strong men struggled with overpowering emotion, there was a responsive chord in many hearts. . . . "Bless Thy dear servant," went on the minister. "and may the joy of Thine own presence fill her soul. . . . At evening time may it be light."

\* \* \* \*

After the benediction it was as though the hush of God fell upon the assembly. Then, slowly, one and another rose from their knees.

But not so dear old Granny Whitlock. They saw her face, as it had been that of an angel. On her lips was a lovely smile, as of a sunset cloudless and serene. She didn't respond when they tried to rouse her. God had made the outgoing of the evening to rejoice. 'Twas on a New Year's day that she ceased to become a widow, and went home to be for ever with the Lord, and with those whom she had loved long since, and lost awhile.

THE END



# Paying the Bill

**W**ILLIAM SCOTT, a soldier lad from a farm in Vermont, after a tremendous march, volunteered to do double-guard duty to spare a sick comrade, slept at his post, was caught, and was under sentence of death, when President Lincoln came to the army and heard of him. The President visited him, chatted about his home, and looked at his mother's photograph. Then he laid his hands on the boy's shoulders and said, with a trembling voice :

"My boy, you are not going to be shot. I believe you when you tell me you could not keep awake. I am going to trust you and send you back to the regiment. But I have been put to a great deal of trouble on your account. Now what I want to know is, how are you going to pay my bill?"

Scott tried to reckon up how, with his pay and what his parents could raise by mortgage on their farm and some help from his comrades, he might pay the bill if it were not more than five or six hundred dollars. .

"But it is a great deal more than that," said the President. "My bill is a very large one. Your friends cannot pay it, nor your army bounty, nor the farm, nor all your comrades. There is only one man in the world who can pay it, and his name is William Scott. If from this day William Scott does his duty, so that, when he comes to die, he

can look me in the face as he does now, and say, 'I have kept my promise, and I have done my duty as a soldier,' then my debt will be paid. Will you make the promise and try to keep it?"

William Scott did promise. And not very long after he was desperately wounded, and he died, but not before he could send a message to the President that he had kept his promise and had tried to be a good soldier, and that he died thinking of Lincoln's kind face, and thanking him for the chance he had given him to fall as a soldier in battle.

There is a voice in every man's breast which tells him, if he will listen



"Will you make the promise and try to keep it?"

## Paying the Bill

to it, that again and again he has gone asleep at his post. Perhaps we have done worse. We may have fought on the wrong side, against God, not for Him. We may have run away in the day of battle, anxious only for our own comfort.

Well, now, forgiveness is offered us. We cannot unsin one sin, but the Father is prepared to treat us as if we had never once failed Him. And to put it in Abraham Lincoln's way, "God has been put to a great deal of trouble on our account." When Jesus, the Son of God, suffered on the Cross, and cried out of the great darkness, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

we see a little of the trouble to which God was put, that we might be forgiven.

We cannot understand completely what it cost God to forgive us, nor entirely why it was so difficult. But we can understand it in part, for we know that any forgiveness which is real forgiveness is "a costly and tragical transaction."

Our Saviour dying on the Cross for us is the sign that sin is a real thing to God. That sin of yours which makes you blush and tingle and squirm, when you let yourself think of it, was a real thing to God, and yet, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Our forgiveness cost God a great deal of trouble, and yet He offers it to us. You can have it now, as you read these lines.

You cannot buy God's pardon, you have to take it, just as this soldier under sentence of death took the President's pardon. But if you take it—and you need it badly—you will be under a like obligation. There is a bill to be paid; and if there is any gratitude in your

hearts you will know that. Our Lord wants, from each of us, just what Lincoln asked:

"If from this day William Scott does his duty, so that, when he comes to die, he can look me in the face as he does now, and say, 'I have kept

my promise and done my duty as a soldier,' then my debt will be paid."

Are you not going to begin? Will you not accept the free pardon of Christ? Will you not be eager to show that you are a man to be trusted by Him Who pardons you? When you come to see "the Face that was spit upon for you, and the Head that was crowned with thorns," do you not wish to be able to say, "I have kept my promise and tried to do my duty as a faithful soldier"? Would you not like to hear His voice say on the day when all men shall be judged: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?

### THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS

The yuletide bells are pealing to-day as long ago,  
Their joyous notes are ringing in the morn;  
The echoes seem to answer in a poem soft and low,—  
"The Prince of Peace in Bethlehem is born."

They bring to us a message on this holy Natal Day,  
As they carol to our hearts in glad accord;  
And e'en as Eastern Sages we would hasten on our way  
To yield our choicest offerings to the Lord.

Not as a babe we see Him in a manger rude and bare;  
His Godhead veiled in lowly human guise;  
In might and majesty He reigns amid the angels fair,  
His glory all unseen by earthly eyes.

Yet He, with love excelling e'en a mother's tenderness,  
Looks down upon a world His footsteps trod;  
To comfort sad and lonely hearts, His little ones to bless,  
To lead all wandering footsteps home to God.

And well may we with gladness on this happy Christmas morn,  
As the welcome message rings o'er vale and hill,  
Uplift our songs in joyous strain—"The Saviour Christ is born,  
Peace on the earth, and unto men goodwill!"

L. M. C.



# The Golden Text

"I DON'T care where I go, or what I do," muttered Lawrence Clayton to himself, as he loitered about the street, kicking the dry autumn leaves that were scattered about the pavement as he walked. No one seeing him could guess that a few short years before he was a young man of great promise, the only son in a happy Christian home. How changed he was! and by what?

Six years before Lawrence left home to take up work in London, the goal of so many young people. At first all went well, and regularly each week the postman brought a letter for the mother at home. Then came temptation yielded to, and Lawrence lost his post. This was the beginning of a downward course, and he was now a wanderer walking from place to place.

Not able to get any settled employment, he lived from hand to mouth.

All this time he was leaving his family in ignorance of his whereabouts, and causing them terrible sorrow.

This particular evening Lawrence was feeling very rebellious at his "lot," as he called it, not recognising that all that had come to him was of his own doing.

At the foot of the street there stood a church, the doors of which were open, and from which the light streamed out into the dark street.

It was the week-night service, and as yet the church was empty; Lawrence, feeling footsore and tired, thought he would go in for a rest.

On entering the church his eye was attracted by these words:

GOD IS LOVE

in gold letters on the further wall. He turned hastily away, and left the

church; but something seemed to draw him back. So he re-entered, taking a seat at the extreme back, and remaining there during the short service. At the close, as the clergyman walked down the aisle to the vestry, he noticed a young man with tears streaming down his face.

Taking a seat at his side the vicar began to talk to this stranger. He took it for granted that something in the sermon had struck home to this young man's heart, and so he asked:

"What was it in the sermon that touched you? Or perhaps it was some words of our beautiful service!"

"Nothing in the sermon or yet in the service," replied Lawrence. "But it was *that*," pointing to the golden letters—GOD IS LOVE.

That was the beginning of a long talk. Poor Lawrence was fairly broken down, and readily listened to the vicar as he told of the God of love Who was "ready to forgive." For Lawrence unburdened his heart to the kind man, not hiding up his downward steps.

They talked for a long time and then knelt in prayer in the empty church, and that night there was "joy in the presence of the angels of God" over a repenting sinner, and next day there was joy in a country home over a letter from an erring son.

'Tis eternal life to know Him,

Oh, how He loves!

Think, ah think, how much we owe Him,

Oh, how He loves!

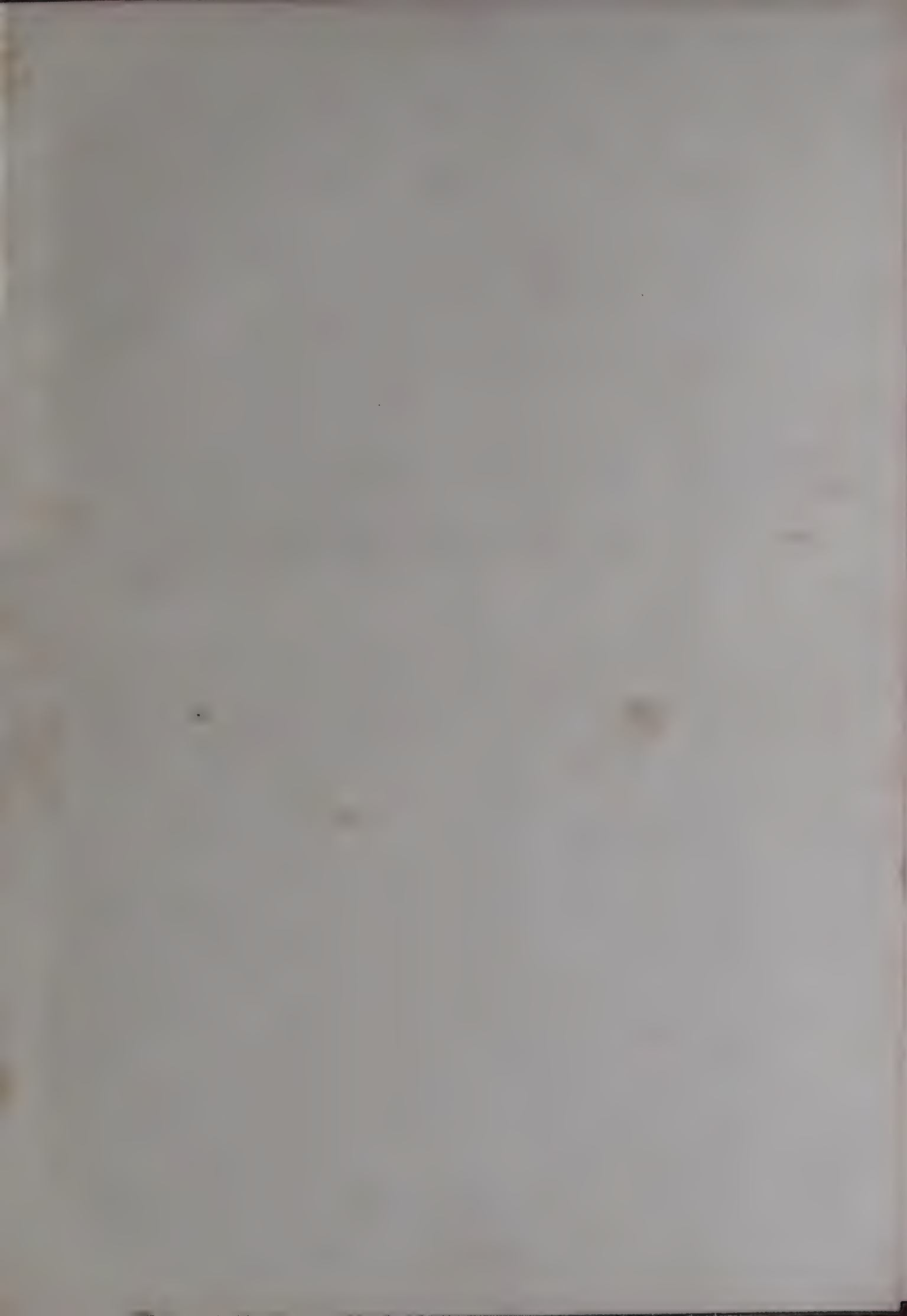
With His precious blood He bought us,

In the wilderness He sought us,

To His fold He kindly brought us,

Oh, how He loves!

LOUISA GOODWIN























datacolor

